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MACLEAN'S

NOV. 2nd 2009

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RICK HILLIER (right) writes in his new book that his toughest battles were fought not in Kandahar but against the bureaucracy in Ottawa

COVER: PETER BREGG/CP. INSETS PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW TOLSON/KEYSTONE. THIS PAGE: FINBARR O'REILLY/REUTERS

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RICHARD HEENE deserves public opprobrium for his publicity stunt, not a jail term

Why Balloon Boy's dad deserves a break

Eccentric inventors were once the stuff of romantic comedy Today they're the object of derision, anger and possible six year jail sentences. Does this say something about eccentrics? Or the rest of us?

Richard Heene, father of six year old Falcon, the famous Balloon Boy, has been called many things over the past week, the most charitable of which may be "candidate for world's worst dad." Yet in many ways he seems the spitting image of Dick Van Dyke's endearing and fatherly Caractacus Potts character from the 1968 musical *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*

Both were crackpot inventors and dreamers Both created bizarre flying machines Both involved their families in madcap adventures And both craved the attention of others for Potts it was recognition of his inventing skill, for Heene, the siren call of reality television

It's true Potts is a fictional character while Heene is an actual father living in Fort Collins, Colo The expectations of acceptable behaviour may differ between the real world and the fictional Then again, the line between reality and fiction has become increasingly blurred when it comes to reality television

Heene may have done lasting damage to his son and family by having them participate in his alleged lie, but he never put his son in any real danger Remember, Falcon was hiding in the garage the entire time So how do we explain the massive public scolding and official persecution?

The local sheriff's department is recommending a wide range of charges against Heene, including conspiracy, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and attempting to influence a public official All are felonies, and some entail fines of up to $500,000 and six-year jail sentences This is clearly judicial overkill The influence charge, for instance, is intended to protect public servants from threats of violence or blackmail Heene did nothing of the sort

If anything, Heene may be guilty of giving a false report, which is a misdemeanour He should be expected to cover the cost of the rescue effort He deserves public opprobrium for involving his son in a massive falsehood, not a lengthy jail term

Heene, boneheaded as he may be, was really just giving people what they want His stunt with the balloon caught the world's attention because it was imaginative, unique and tremendously visual He did everything television audiences and producers demand these days in a successful media event His crime is not his attempt to present falsehood as truth, reality television already does that on a daily basis with angry twentysomethings locked in glass houses, families swapping wives, beauty pageant style searches for true love—these are transparently phony attempts at reality His real crime was that he did it too well We were transfixed by his balloon caper, despite our collective better judgment, because it seemed too fantastic to be fake

No one likes to be made the fool Not the sheriff of Larimer County and not the rest of us either But Heene's punishment should fit his crime, not our anger at being duped M

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'Saskatchewan's "economic revolution" began before Brad Wall's government took office'

THE REVIEWS ARE IN

I GREW UP with the Beatles I am old enough to remember the release of *Abbey Road*. For you to put our PM and his family on the front cover, recreating the *Abbey Road* album cover, is in supreme poor taste ("He gets by with a little help from his friends," National, Oct. 19) So Harper can sing a song and play piano—he's suddenly acceptable as a prime minister? Does the hypocrisy and opportunism of this appearance escape you? You obviously have no clue what the Beatles meant to my generation, the one paying the most taxes in this country
Garth Wickens, Ottawa

I HAVE ALWAYS been on a wire when it comes to Prime Minister Stephen Harper. That changed on Oct. 4. Watching the news, I was pleasantly surprised with the Prime Minister's performance of *With a Little Help from My Friends*. He has a terrific singing voice—who knew? I see him in a different light now, and it is a much better view. As for the people opposing his singing performance, they are just old fuddy duddies.
Debra Bentley, Peterborough, Ont.

WHAT IS UP with the Stephen Harper love-fest? Please bring back news reporting, rather than the pro-Conservative propaganda you've been serving up as of late
Leigh Blakely, Niagara Falls, Ont.

AFTER READING your Stephen Harper cover story, I'm wondering if I can find a lawyer who can sue *Maclean's* for the senseless, brutal murder of 12 minutes of my precious time. Why do you reduce your journalists to asking the leader of our country questions that sound like something out of a vintage *Teen Beat* magazine? Seriously: "Lennon or McCartney—who do you prefer?" Were Harper and your interviewer in their PJs, painting each other's nails during this interview? Your discussion with Gene Simmons (interview, Oct. 19) more closely resembled real journalism
Lamare Robinson, Leamington, Ont.

BEFORE BRAD

FOR SOMEONE who has admired Peter C. Newman's political writings for almost 50 years, I was totally amazed that he would write such a fawning story as "Bragging rights" (National, Oct. 12) about Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall. If we are to believe Newman, Saskatchewan's "economic revolution" began when the Wall government assumed office in November 2007. In fact, we were well into "SaskaBoom" before the government ever changed. According to Statistics Canada, in October 2007, Saskatchewan recorded what was then the highest ever employment level for the month of October, marking the 19th consecutive monthly increase on a year-over-year basis. Now that Premier Wall and Finance Minister Rod Gantefoer have underestimated potash revenue to the Saskatchewan Treasury in 2009 by $1.3 billion, we will see what efficient managers of our economy Wall's government really are. I have no problem



with Newman applauding Saskatchewan's progress and Premier Wall's contribution to it. What I cannot abide is historical revisionism, the clear implication that Saskatchewan was a "backwater" prior to November 2007 and was saved only by the kid from Swift Current. It's not so, and I firmly believe Premier Wall would be the first to admit it
Dave Morgan, Regina

TRUST ISSUES

PAUL ROSENZWEIG'S article "Why the U.S. doesn't trust Canada" (World, Oct. 12) was a bit arrogant and degrading—and typically American. He asserts that Canada can't have sovereignty and U.S. co-operation, yet he is myopic about the consequences of U.S. actions. Perhaps the U.S. can't have it both ways, either being a world bully and free from attack by enemies. Too bad the U.S. can't learn to pour more effort into learning the ways of peace and compromise, if they did, then maybe they'd come to appreciate mutual trust.
Gordon Allaby, Osler, Sask.

WHY DOES Paul Rosenzweig perpetuate the incorrect phrase "the longest undefended border in the world," when his article goes on at length to highlight the efforts made to improve defending it? He himself was employed by the American Department of Homeland Security to defend it. I'm sure all the Canadian and U.S. customs officials staffed along our border would agree that the term is "longest unfenced border in the world."
Connie Lyndon, Calgary

TERMS OF FRIENDSHIP

MICHAEL PETROU makes a very valid point in his article "The real problem in Iran" (World, Oct. 19). Our concern with the nuclear development of other countries is the type of pedantic nonsense that North Americans should not put up with. Frankly I get the impression that "developed," democratic nations spend too much time playing big brother while what we ought to do is reserve our foreign influence for creating proper foreign relations, not writing up the terms of our friendships
Owen Matson, Innisfil, Ont.

BEAR HUGS

I JUST ABOUT fell off my couch when I saw the photo of Danny Watkins striding on the football field for the Baylor Bears ("A Canadian bear in Texas," Sports, Oct. 12). About 10 years ago, I had the pleasure of coaching this young fellow when he was a different Bear, on the Mt. Boucherie Bears rugby team in Kelowna. Danny was an exceptional character. I remember his great effort, integrity, and leadership on and off the rugby pitch as being second to none. The fact that he became a firefighter exemplifies the selfless nature I was lucky enough to become familiar with. His bright future is very well deserved!
James Pengilly, Westbank, B.C.

WHAT A WASTE

NANCY MACDONALD'S "One colossal waste" was a great article that shows that unless real costs are passed on to the consumer, our wasteful behavior will not change. Real cost pricing would help eliminate the waste of gas, energy and food. Ignorance, complacency and mansion mentality are rampant in North America, and the waste of water, food and energy will be the gauges which we will be measured by in the future
Peter Errmann, Calgary

WE WILL never run out of water ("One colossal waste," Environment, Oct. 12). I wonder if your article is readying the population for the government and corporations to further trick us into believing that we are running out of water, just as they convinced us that we are running out of electricity? These people create artificial shortages and, under the guise of conservation, create new taxes and dividend-producing revenue. We have been brainwashed into believing we must flagellate ourselves for any excess. Excess is absolutely fine if it doesn't hurt anyone. Please don't play into the hands of the crooks who want to monopolize water
Wayne Snyder, Ripley, Ont.

HOW TO SAVE THE WORLD

I WANT TO applaud you for pointing out that real world pricing could counteract waste in critical areas such as food, water, and fuel ("Real ways to save the world," Environment, Oct. 12). But the suggestion that we have to voluntarily lower our standard of living now for the sake of future generations ain't necessarily so. Twenty-six years ago, we built an energy efficient house. With more intelligent use of only conventional off-the-shelf materials, attention to better design, and quality control during construction, we now live in a comfortable house that cost about five per cent more than a conventional building and uses 50 per cent less fossil fuel. Lowering consumption is not the same as lowering the standard of living. As a country, we're not even doing the simplest things to get better use of our resources. Apparently, it's politically more attractive to fund multi-billion-dollar nuclear plants and carbon capture and storage schemes
Garry and Cheryl Atchison, Edmonton

YOUR 10 STEPS to save the planet are comical to say the least. Many of us have saved water all our lives. Has your writer ever bathed in a round galvanized tub in the middle of the kitchen? Incidentally, more than one person bathed in the same water. No room to share the bath, either. People that have survived the 1930s and lived to now being told to save the world have been doing that all their lives.
Bill Lepp, Steinbach, Alta.

GETTING GREENWASHED

YOUR ARTICLE "The eco-sell" (Environment, Oct. 12) states that Generation Y gladly pays a premium for green-conscious brands, as they are "actually aware of the threats of pollution." They should be lauded for this. But in the same article it says that an Ottawa-based environmental marketing firm, in examining 2,219 products, found that more than 98 per cent were guilty of some kind of greenwashing, e.g., the products are not all that green, natural, eco-friendly, etc. So Generation Y is not saving the earth, instead, it is being brainwashed by attractive advertising that promises them the moon, as long as they pay more
Louis Vroomen, Chateauguay, Que.



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

I WOULD LIKE to offer you absolutely unmitigated praise for your remarks regarding the recent arrest of Roman Polanski ("Why Roman Polanski belongs in prison," From the Editors, Oct. 19). I admire that the brave victim has forgiven him, I admire that her family appears to have done so as well. I don't know that I could, if such a thing had happened to me or any of the children I know and love. I will sleep a little better knowing that there are other Canadians who would fight for justice if it were my children attacked, no matter how famous or talented the attacker might be
Katherine Mitic, Toronto

IS *MACLEAN'S* getting its interpretation of the news now from Glenn Beck? After Whoopi Goldberg's remarks about Roman Polanski, commentators had a field day with the phrase "it wasn't rape rape," but neglected to hear that she was referring to what Polanski was charged with—having unlawful sex with a minor—which Goldberg couldn't remember, she just knew he wasn't charged with just rape, hence "rape rape." Her comments had nothing to do with Polanski's actions, which she condemned. I would expect you to have shown a bit more due diligence by reporting her comments and intent accurately. Of even more concern, Goldberg is misquoted and condemned, while Barbara Amiel's apologist column ("Reflex lock Polanski up rants are shocking," Opinion, Oct. 19) calls rape "a smaller amount of pleasure" and a "sexual encounter." Sickening.
Valerie Pruegger, Calgary

CONGRATULATIONS for exposing Polanski for what he is: dangerous and unrepentant. Why do so many defend him? They can't accept they could be so completely wrong about someone they liked and admired. This denial is also a major barrier to victims coming forward. One brave girl talked. How many other children have been assaulted by men of Polanski's stature and are remaining silent?
Natalie Gordon, Winnipeg

ROMAN POLANSKI admitted having sex with a 13-year-old girl. That was bad. After that, he was forced to spend 32 years in exile. The girl forgave him a long time ago. That is not enough for the author of your editorial. Does it not matter that his colleagues from Hollywood, artists, and politicians asked for clemency for him? Then you praised the Swiss government for the decision to extradite Polanski to the U.S. At the same time here in Canada, another gentleman, Hassan Diab, has so far avoided extradition to France where he is accused of partaking in a plot to bomb a Paris synagogue, which killed four people. Not only has he not yet been sent to France, but he was offered a position at Carleton University (later withdrawn). Somehow I haven't read your editorials roaring against that.
Henryk Gruder, Ottawa


'CONGRATULATIONS for exposing Polanski for what he is: dangerous and unrepentant'

FRANCOIS MORI/CP

ROMAN POLANSKI belongs in prison. He should be returned to the U.S. to serve his full sentence. He's an old man—so what? So are the child-abusing Roman Catholic priests and the Nazi war criminals.
John Henderson, St. Catharines, Ont.

OLD WEAKENED men, even those who are Oscar winning moviemaking artists with warped friends who petition for their defence, must pay for crimes they committed when they were young. Anyone who thinks that Polanski, given his youth back for one hour, would not conduct himself in the same manner should think again.
Brenda Michaud, Sarnia, Ont.

AN UNPOPULAR POSITION

YOUR EDITORIAL about Roman Polanski is logical, fair and thoughtful. Barbara Amiel's column ("Reflex lock Polanski-up rants are shocking," Opinion, Oct. 19)—not so much. I am not surprised that she would defend the bourgeoisie, regardless of faults, but her logic does not stand up to scrutiny. "The definition of childhood depends on the culture," she says. Yes, it does. Child brides are common in some Third World countries, but America has laws against older men having sex with 13-year-olds, even if consensual, and this certainly was not. Polanski confessed as much. In Amiel's world, one would only jail the stupid, poor and powerless. The elites would dance to a different tune. Her apologetics are about on par with Whoopi Goldberg's.
Sigmund Roseth, Mississauga, Ont.

BARBARA AMIEL describes Polanski's actions as "insanely stupid." They were more than that: a 43-year-old having sex with a 13-year-old is illegal, even if it's consensual—which it wasn't. Amiel attempts to rationalize this behaviour by arguing the "definition of childhood depends on culture." That's like arguing the Dutch are allowed to smoke weed when you get busted in Canada with an ounce. Polanski broke a California law while in California. What's most concerning is that these arguments are coming from someone who was once a 13-year-old girl.
Andrew Ginn, Toronto

BARBARA AMIEL'S energetic defence of Roman Polanski was an illogical page of tripe. Amiel implies the 13-year-old victim is a liar ("this agreement might have been the truth of what happened"), then goes on to imply she was asking for it ("she had some drug and sexual experience"). By the way, your editorial, "Why Roman Polanski belongs in prison," was excellent.
Glendene Reid, Shemogue, N.B.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A B.C. JUDGE used a technicality to throw out polygamy charges against Winston Blackmore and Jim Oler ("Above the law," Seven Days, Oct. 12). Yet, on Oct. 18, 2002, Canada ratified the Protocol on the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and is legally obligated to uphold it. It states that polygamy contravenes women's equality rights and also harms their children. Sections 15 and 28 of the Charter guarantee women equality with men, and that in Canada, religious practices stop at that point where those practices start to contravene the rights of another. The Charter was written for all Canadians, not just Winston Blackmore.
Jancis M. Andrews, Sechelt, B.C.

DON'T BLAME OBAMA

OBAMA HASN'T divided America ("How Obama divided America," World, Oct. 5). He's simply given a voice to people who've never had one before. If anyone's "divided America," it's the commercial health insurance lobby and their billion dollar campaign of lies.
Peter Lake, MD, Queen Charlotte, B.C.

AS AN ELDERLY person, I am thoroughly satisfied with the health care we have. I find that the complainers are often the ones abusing it. I have to admit that, before it was instituted, I opposed it. Ignorance breeds fear. If only Americans were informed of the true facts, maybe they would be more envious and support a public system.
Fred Leclaire, Montreal

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HOW EMAIL ROTS YOUR BRAIN

Brian Bethune talks to John Freeman about his new book, *The Tyranny of E-Mail: The Four-Thousand-Year Journey to Your Inbox*. macleans.ca/bethune



BLOGS



JAIME WEINMAN
If Fox News dropped the U.S.-style pretense of objectivity it would be a lot less problematic and might help pave the way for a genuine liberal alternative. Bashing Fox for pretending it isn't conservative makes sense; bashing Fox for *being* conservative doesn't.
macleans.ca/weinman



PAUL WELLS
The benefits of enhanced Canada-EU trade would be broad and deep. The benefits of continued sandbagging to prop up some dairy farmers include a measure of gratitude in a string of rural ridings across Ontario and Quebec. I'll leave it to you to do that math.
macleans.ca/wells

THE COMMONS
Aaron Wherry sketches the daily ritual of allegation and incrimination in Ottawa. macleans.ca/wherry

WEB POLL RESULTS

Do you take issue with Governor General Michaelle Jean's recent claim to being Canada's "head of state"?

No. Jean is the de-facto head of state in the Queen's absence (30%)

Yes. The Queen is Canada's head of state and the government was right to call Jean on it. (40%)



I couldn't care less about ceremonial titles—down with the monarchy! (30%)

THIS WEEK'S POLL: macleans.ca/poll

OPENING WEEKEND



Brian D. Johnson reviews the Nick Hornby-penned *An Education*, starring Carey Mulligan. macleans.ca/johnson

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A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF AXL ROSE

Welcome (back) to the jungle Fresh off of being accused of plagiarizing material for Guns N' Roses' latest album, *Chinese Democracy*, the 47-year-old front man announced on Monday a series of Canadian tour dates that will take his band to 13 cities—from Winnipeg to Moncton, N.B. On Wednesday, *The Middle*, an ABC sitcom set in Indiana, debuted featuring a character named after Rose, who hails from the Hoosier state.

Good news

Clean slate

Hamid Karzai might not like it, but a UN panel's rejection of hundreds of thousands of votes in Afghanistan's disputed August election is welcome news for the troubled country. Accounts of widespread electoral fraud on the part of Karzai's supporters had weakened his government in the eyes of Afghans, and left Westerners wondering exactly what their troops were fighting for. The prospect of a runoff election offers the government at least the hope of legitimacy—the lifeblood of any democracy. If Karzai wins fair and square, he will have demonstrated growth as a leader and new-found respect for the electoral process. If he loses, Canada and other NATO countries will get a fresh start with his successor. After an election tarnished by the spectre of voter fraud, that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Unclenching the fist

Iranian nuclear officials met in Vienna with members of the International Atomic Energy Agency this week to discuss an agreement whereby Russia and France would treat low-enriched Iranian uranium and turn it into fuel rods for a research reactor in Tehran. In return, Iran would guarantee to not use the enriched uranium to produce weapons. We're wary of any promises made by Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad—last seen on the world stage fulminating about capitalism and the West. But this is a good start toward neutralizing Tehran's nuclear threat.

Just-in-time delivery

The first doses of the swine flu vaccine went out across Canada this week, and were expected to be approved for use within days. That's a bit ahead of schedule, but not a moment too soon for Canadians. B.C. is in the midst of a major H1N1 outbreak—nearly 15 per cent of recent visits to the B.C. Children's Hospital in Vancouver were for flu-like symptoms. And a recent poll suggests two thirds of Canadians will avoid shaking hands out of fear of spreading the illness. If the vaccine can't keep the bug at bay, perhaps it will at least help keep us civil.

Bad news

Inhuman touch

The logistical problems posed by Canada's growing prison population hit home this week as operators of a remand centre in Edmonton revealed plans to dispense with in-person visits in favour of video conferencing. The idea is to clear the backlog of people waiting to pay visits, but it's a callous solution to pressures that will only worsen as the Harper government proceeds with plans to toughen sentencing laws, keeping more convicts inside for longer. The feds say they will spend more on prisons—"virtual visiting" equipment should not be on their shopping list.

Game misconduct

There are some things you just don't do in this country. Right up there on the list: don't steal money from peewee hockey players. The Clarington Thunder collected more than $4,000 last weekend, selling raffle tickets and gift baskets to help cover the team's travel, uniform and ice-time expenses. A few hours later, they discovered the money had been stolen. This unfortunate story comes on the heels of the arrest of Torontonian Randy Gumbley, who allegedly scammed 100 young players into shelling out $2,800 to play in front of talent scouts at a non-existent tournament in France.

Consider the source

Another week, another debacle at the UN Human Rights Council. This time, the council endorsed a report accusing Israel of committing war crimes during its campaign in Gaza last year. Not surprisingly, the report makes no mention of crimes on the part of Palestinian terrorist group Hamas—even though another UN-commissioned study, issued by international judge Richard Goldstone, charged both Israel and Hamas with war crimes. Then again, what else should we expect from a "human rights council" composed of Cuba, China and Saudi Arabia—some of the worst human rights abusers in the world?

Homer eroticism

The latest *Playboy* issue—featuring a buxom, bright-yellow-skinned, four-fingered beauty with a blue bouffant—is causing quite a stir. Marge Simpson, matriarch of *The Simpsons*, appears in skimpy lingerie and with doughnuts hiding her breasts. For a generation of kids brought up on the show, Marge's sexy turn comes as an unpleasant surprise—we liked her better as a tidy, slightly neurotic mom. Maybe Marge could learn a thing or two from Kelly Osbourne, the former drug addict daughter of heavy-metal legend Ozzy Osbourne recently turned down an offer from *Playboy*, saying, "I wouldn't want my father or brother to see me naked." M

FACE OF THE WEEK



INA FASSBENDER/REUTERS

FEEDING TIME: A zookeeper feeds milk to a newborn male giraffe at a zoo in Duisburg, Germany. The giraffe was born on Oct. 3.

THIS WEEK

NEWSMAKERS


DAN & PETER AYKROYD

The thorn in Stelmach'e eide

It was a rough week for Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach. A new poll suggests he and his Progressive Conservatives are in free fall. His televised speech, intended to reassure Albertans about his handling of the recession, was widely panned and his attempt to set an austerity example with a 15-per-cent cut in his premier's allowance fell on deaf ears. The nurses' and teachers' unions have rejected his call for voluntary wage freezes. And on Saturday, the Wildrose Alliance chose former journalist **Danielle Smith** as its new leader—continuing the Alliance's evolution from cranky protest party to credible conservative alternative.

To ghosthust, you muet first helieve

Peter Aykroyd, an 87-year-old former federal civil servant who lives in a spirit-infested family homestead north of Kingston, Ont., has penned one of the season's oddest memoirs. *A History of Ghosts: The True Story of Seances, Mediums, Ghosts, and Ghostbusters* tells the multi-generational story of his spiritualist family. The foreword is supplied by his famous son, Dan, *Saturday Night Live* comedian and co-writer of the hit movie *Ghostbusters*. Dan writes how his family, from his great-grandfather onward, were serious and scientific investigators of the paranormal. "Part of *Ghostbusters*' appeal derives from the cold, rational, acceptance-of-the-fantastic-as-routine tone that **Bill Murray**, **Harold Ramis**, director **Ivan Reitman**, and I were able to sustain in the movie," he writes. With good reason: the Aykroyds are believers. Dan's grandfather was a Bell Telephone engineer who considered the possibility of contacting the spirit realm via a crystal radio set. And one of Dan's daughters, he writes, claims "glops of light and other shapes attend her when pictures are taken in and around the old family farmhouse."


JAMES & PAUL McCARTNEY

Thie little piggy went to Paris

Newsmakers spoke in haste last week when it suggested **Paris Hilton** was unlikely to acquire a British-bred micro pig because the extremely intelligent animals aren't available in the U.S. Hilton has now ordered a bred-in-the-U.S. Royal Dandie Extreme miniature pot-bellied pig from an Oregon breeder. "So excited for my new piglette [sic] to come home to me," she Tweeted on Friday. The always predictable folks at People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals are less than enthused, saying she treats her pets as "disposable." In fact, the pet-loving Hilton has quite a menagerie: it's boyfriends that end up in the discard pile.

Curvee and all

Meghan McCain, daughter of former U.S. Republican presidential candidate **John McCain**, would like to get something off her chest. "Don't call me a Slut," she thundered in her column on the *Daily Beast* website. The furor erupted after McCain used Twitter to post a picture of herself spilling out of a low-cut tank top. Reaction to a revealing photo of a Republican-values gal generated almost as much Web traffic as a certain Colorado family's errant balloon. First an abashed McCain Tweeted an apology—"I have clearly made a huge mistake and am sorry 2 those that are offended." Then she got mad. "Honest, I don't feel that I have anything to feel ashamed of," she wrote in her column. "I've always embraced my curves and will continue to do so."


GEORGIA MAY JAGGER

They did it for their familiee

An extramarital affair with a legislative assembly clerk has damaged the personal life and reputation of Northwest Territories Premier **Floyd Roland**. Now his political future rests with Ted Hughes, a no-nonsense former judge and one-time B.C. conflict-of-interest commissioner. Hughes conducted a hearing in Yellowknife to determine if Roland breached the public trust by keeping secret his relationship with clerk **Patricia Russell**. Both were married and have since left their spouses to live together. During the hearing, Russell denied allegations she shared confidential caucus discussions with her lover. Roland told Hughes they kept the affair secret out of consideration for their families. Hughes may table his report by the end of October.

Beatlee ve. Stonee, next generation

The children of two of rock's biggest names have taken a different approach to fame. **James McCartney**, son of Paul, has always avoided attention. He recently debuted his band Light to just 30 people in a tiny Oxford pub. McCartney, 32, and his band went to extraordinary attempts to conceal the name and parentage of their lead singer. "James has a way with melody," wrote an approving gossip columnist for the tabloid *Sun*, "and a set of pipes which are more than a match for his dad's." Meantime, **Mick Jagger**'s toothy daughter **Georgia May Jagger** is sprawled topless atop a Union Jack in a new advertising campaign for Hudson Jeans. While crossed arms or strategic camera angles keep the photos just on this side of decency, they have still caused a stir, because, to paraphrase an old Beatles tune, she is just 17.

PM: AYKROYD/O. MILLENIUM
LEFT: TERESA PATAKI/HANDOUT/GETTY; DAVID SOMMERVILLE/CP; GERALD HERBERT/CP; BRIAN BOWEN SMITH/FOX; THEO WARGO/GETTY; PHILIPPE WOJAZER/REUTERS

Spacing out

There's a bit of a ham in any politician but the Elvis-loving former Japanese premier **Junichiro Koizumi** is uncommonly blessed. He once famously crooned the King's tunes while on an official tour of Presley's Graceland mansion. But now Koizumi, 67, is really reaching for the stars. His newest gig is as a voice actor for an extraterrestrial hero who fights aliens from outer space in the movie *Mega Monster Ball: Ultra Galaxy Sute*, it was great to be premier of a major world powe, but being Ultraman King has its advantages.


TYREN SCOTT

From hell, etraight to Whistler

Skateboarding San Diego chef **Dave Levey** survived the fire-and-brimstone of celebrity chef **Gordon Ramsay** to win the top prize on his *Hell's Kitchen* reality show on Fox TV. Levey wins a job for a year working under executive chef **James Walt** at Araxi Restaurant in Whistler. He starts Jan. 4, barely a month before the start of the Winter Olympics. Of course, he's survived greater challenges. Not only did he endure the usual hazing by Ramsay, he spent most of the competition in pain after breaking his wrist. Such grit, combined with the 32-year-old's skater-boy vibe, should make for a perfect Whistler fit. Levey says the tightly edited reality show was mostly real. "What people saw," he says, "is very similar to who I am."


DAVE LEVEY

Kids say the darnedest thinge

Lisa Scott of Paulina, La., promised her son **Tyren** she'd take him to see U.S. President **Barack Obama**, so last Thursday they went to the President's town hall meeting in New Orleans. Tyren raised his hand during a question period and Obama gave him the floor. "I have to say, why do people hate you?" he stammered. "They supposed to love you. God is love." The President gave a diplomatic reply about how such anger is politically motivated, and people are worried about their futures. The answer was fine, but the question later gave some commentators pause. Just when and why had the hate and rage so troubling to a young boy become a daily part of American discourse? "It was a pretty good question, I must say," Tyren's mother later reflected.

Free from Evin

Newsweek journalist **Maziar Bahari** was released on bail Saturday after almost four months in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison. Maztar, who holds dual Iranian-Canadian citizenship, was arrested June 21 after reporting on the demonstrations following President **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad**'s disputed re-election. "Hopefully this is a sign that other journalists who continue to languish in jail in Iran will also be released in the near future," said **Annie Game**, executive director of Canadian Journalists for Free Expression. Bahari's wife, **Paola Gourley**, is confined to a London hospital where she is due to give birth to their first child on Oct. 26. It's unclear if Bahari, who still faces charges, can leave Tehran to attend the birth.


LAVIGNE & WHIBLEY

Fortunately, only the marriage ie dead

Just three years ago they were rockers in love. The musical marriage in 2006 of **Avril Lavigne** and Sum 41 frontman **Deryck Whibley** ended last week with Lavigne filing for divorce. Neither said what caused their "irreconcilable differences." Lavigne was seen this summer in St. Tropez with oil heir **Brandon Davis**. Whibley was recently in Las Vegas with model **Hanna Beth Merjos**. It may simply be they married too young. As Lavigne said on her website, "Deryck and I have been together for 6½ years. We have been friends since I was 17, started dating when I was 19, and married when I was 21. I am grateful for our time together, and I am grateful and blessed for our remaining friendship." And Whibley is grateful to be alive. Internet rumours last weekend had him dead—not a good start to single life. Luckily that was just a hoax.

Sarko's son also rises

Jean Sarkozy, all of 23 and repeating his second year at the Sorbonne, has been given a boost into the family business by his father **Nicolas**. The French president has appointed his son chairman of La Défense, the public agency administering France's biggest business district, in west Paris. There are predictable cries of nepotism and even some of Sarkozy's cabinet squirm at claims he is running a presidential monarchy. Sarkozy has denounced the "hysterical man hunt" against his son. Jean maintains a dignified silence, relying on what critics concede are two of his greatest assets: his golden good looks and his very nice hair.


NICOLAS & JEAN SARKOZY



WITH EVERY ACTION and inaction, Harper is changing Canada—and we're not noticing

When the referee wasn't looking



PAUL WELLS

We're all exhausted up here in Ottawa. We are so busy telling you whether there will be an election (Yes!) (No!) (*SO EXCITING*) that we sometimes don't notice things. Sometimes the government doesn't mind our not noticing, and it plays little tricks to encourage the not noticing. So on a Friday afternoon the government announced it was putting a question to the Supreme Court of Canada. Friday afternoons are an excellent time to say things if you don't want them noticed. Yet it is such a rare thing for a government to put a question to the Supreme Court that some of us reported it this time, even though it had happened on a Friday afternoon. All the same, by Monday most of us had forgotten it had even happened, because we needed to spend more time wondering whether there will be an election (Yes!) (No!) (*SO EXCITING*).

The question the Harper government has put to the Supremes is whether the federal government has the power to establish a national securities regulator, a body for writing and enforcing the rules around transactions like stock trades. The question really is whether Canada will provide a single regulatory climate for investors, or a patchwork of different ones.

In the best courtroom manner, the Harper Conservatives are taking care to ask a question to which they already know the answer: of *course* Ottawa has the power to establish a national securities regulator. Lots of countries establish national securities regulators. Investors love them, because they only have to file paperwork once. Canada's 1867 Constitution is pretty clear on the matter, allocating to Ottawa the right to regulate "trade and commerce." But provincial premiers hate the idea of a national regulator, because each of them gets to run a provincial regulator with its own rules. When they aren't jealously guarding their constitutional jurisdictions against federal intrusion, provincial premiers are always happy to intrude into federal jurisdictions. And premiers seem to like living in a country where investment across provincial borders is as complex and expensive as possible.

Or they used to. More and more provincial governments have begun to see things Ottawa's way. And by "Ottawa's," I mean both the federal Conservatives and the federal Liberals, because the Chrétien and Martin governments used to make wistful noises about wanting to establish a national securities regime too. By now only Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec are resisting federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's project for a national regulator. Alberta politicians are fond of firewalls, it seems. Manitoba seems simply to be slow making up its mind (its finance minister, Greg Selinger, just replaced Gary Doer as the province's premier). Quebec is a fantasyland, of course. Once the Supremes rule that federal jurisdiction is federal jurisdiction, Quebec and Alberta won't have a leg to stand on. Even then the Harper government won't force them to close their little local securities regulators down. Investors will take care of that by declining to invest in any jurisdiction that tries to snub the national regime. The feds don't have to challenge provincial "rights." They merely have to assert their own. The logic of a larger market will do the rest.

So in some ways this whole business is a foregone conclusion. But there's still a lot at stake. The Supremes will find themselves tempted to draw some sweeping conclusion about the nature of federal responsibility for the economy, and the limits of provincial responsibility. These are thorny questions. Previous prime ministers were reluctant to tackle them, which is why Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien and Brian Mulroney all declined to pick the fight with the recalcitrant provinces that Harper is now picking.

So one of the most interesting things about this whole business is that Harper persists. He's happy if we don't notice, which is why his government made its announcement on a Friday afternoon. The Prime Minister has always been comfortable doing his hardest playing in the corners where the referee isn't looking.

The consummate failure of the opposition parties to sustain and deliver a coherent analysis of this government that rises above "He's so *mean*" leaves Harper plenty of room to advance his agenda. With two projects, the securities regulator and the attempt to secure free trade with Europe, Harper is trying to strengthen the Canadian economic union. With a succession of other projects—his abandonment of state-run child care in favour of per-child cash benefits, his lack of interest in higher education, his eagerness to underwork his health minister and his intergovernmental affairs minister (go ahead, name either one)—he is weakening the social union. The Canada he is building, deliberately and with little scrutiny or real opposition, has a stronger national market and a weaker national vision. I'm sure he would defend that project elo

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quently if pressed. His opponents seem disinclined to press him.

One more thing. You can sure tell the difference between Harper when he wants something done and Harper when he doesn't. Contrast the methodical advancement of the securities regulator project with the Prime Minister's monumental incuriosity on the treatment of Afghan detainees. A report on prisoner abuse bounced all over Ottawa but somehow never made it to the desk of any minister with power to do anything about the alleged abuse. A commission investigating the cases of abuse that did arise has been requesting documents from the Harper government, in vain, for over a year. With every action and every stubborn inaction, Stephen Harper continues to reshape this country. One day we'll all look back and wonder how we missed it while it was happening. M

ON THE WEB For more Paul Wells visit his blog at **www.macleans.ca/inklesswells**

Why Jews keep voting against themselves



BARBARA AMIEL

Remember when there were seats to lie down on in airports? Now everything has fixed arms, a barrier to anything but stern upright positions. A 10 hour delay last Saturday in Fort Lauderdale airport was quite a stretch with naught to stretch on except two tiny units of armless seats coveted by 154 stranded passengers.

Happily, I had just purchased a jolly good book. Less fortunately, it had a flypaper title in bold large letters on a white background. It read *Why Are Jews Liberals?*

Now I know it is possible loads of people, perhaps a majority, have never met a Jew as far as they know, couldn't care less about Israel and are sick of Jewish talking and writing heads endlessly discussing themselves. But I was in Florida.

"Is it a good book?" asked a fellow strandee. Absolutely terrific, I replied, which it is because Norman Podhoretz is a splendid writer, and irrespective of politics that surface in the second half of the book, the first half is a fascinating synopsis of Jewish history. "What's the reason you're a liberal?" I asked, knowing instinctively he was Jewish and if American, a rigorous Democrat and if Canadian, never further right wing than the Liberals—even when they were carefully supporting most UN condemnations of Israel or at best abstaining. "I suppose," he replied, "it's a Jewish tradition to care about the underprivileged and policies to help them." Bingo.

Generally speaking, most Jews justify their voting this way. About 80 per cent of Jews vote Democrat in the States and Liberal or NDP in Canada, largely in the belief they are voting for the party that has best helped the oppressed—a big leap—and will continue to do so—an even bigger one. Podhoretz's thesis is that they are, unlike any other group, voting against their own best interests and survival, or in the epigram of professor Milton Himmelfarb, "They earn like Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans" (though as Podhoretz points out, Episcopalians may no longer be the richest nor Puerto Ricans the poorest). I'd add that in voting left these days, Jews are also voting against the interests of the poor and the underdogs of our society.

> More than three-quarters of U.S. Jews voted for Obama. Only four per cent of Israel's Jews support him.

I suppose most Jews vote against their own interests for the simple reason they don't know their own interests. Jews vote for affirmative action for disadvantaged groups. This supports quotas, which disadvantage Jews given their percentage in the population and their achievement educationally. Quotas and the barriers they erect to equality are one of the reasons their grandparents came to America. Jews vote left for "tolerance," not heeding that at present, intolerance flourishes most strongly on the left, which censors speech, debate and Israel. They vote for the left because they believe it will take care of the poor without understanding that left-wing economic policies today cripple the ability of society to help the poor as well as the ability of the wealthy, Jewish or Gentile, to earn the money they want to donate.

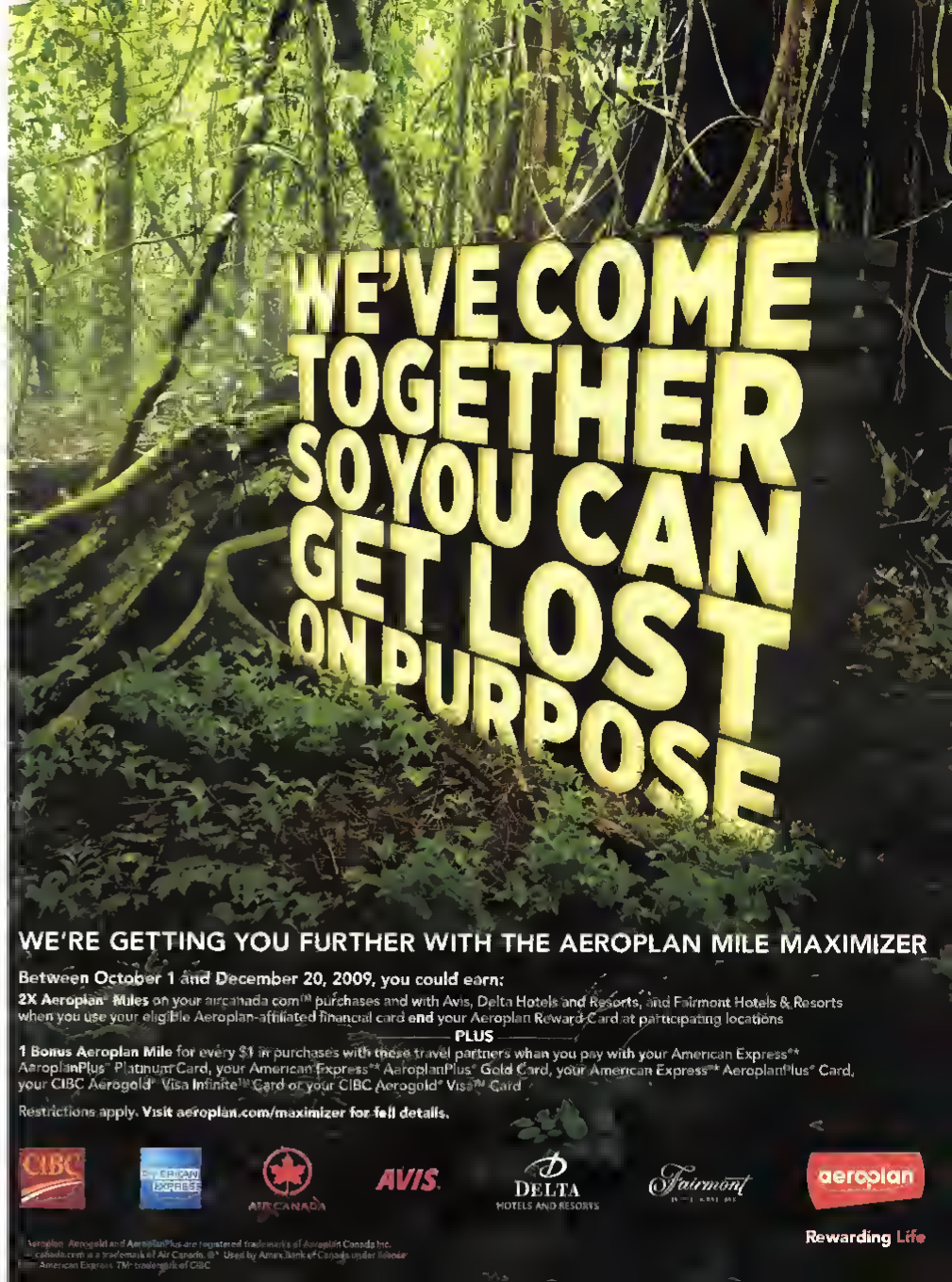
More than three quarters of American Jews voted for Barack Obama and even now 64 per cent support him. In Israel, according to one recent poll, only four per cent of their Jews support him. Israelis, for whom the selection of an American president could always mean life or death—and at this moment in history with a nuclear Iran and Islamism on the march never more so—are not inclined to vote on the basis of fashion or oratory.

North American Jews may think that American policies toward Israel are not high on their worry list for all sorts of reasons. These include a determination never to be accused of dual loyalties, a desire for social acceptance that the support of Israel may preclude in some quarters (Barbra Streisand cancelled her long-standing appearance last year at Israel's 60th anniversary celebrations for unspecified reasons), even a personal embarrassment over the existence of Israel. There may even be some who feel that Israel is not good for the Jews: it has become a lightning rod for anti-Semitism instead of the lifeboat it was intended to be. Jews seem not to understand that whatever their views about Israel's policies—which can most certainly be the subject of legitimate dispute—the elimination of Israel now, whether by force or demographics, would constitute a crippling blow to Judaism inside and outside the country. If eliminating the Jewish state is successful, Islamism will have won a major victory. Without a homeland, Jews will have no coherent defence against the lies and calumnies that will then be circulated about the former Israel and rebound on the world's remaining Jews. Burgeoning anti-Semitism, barely restrained now, will have clear sailing.

How did we get here? Podhoretz's theory is that the Jewish intellectuals and political leaders from eastern Europe who came to America had stopped believing in the God of Judaism and replaced it with the Torah of Marxism. When that failed it was replaced by an unshakable belief that contemporary liberalism was identical with the impulses of the Torah. But whatever *tikkun olah* (Hebrew for "repair of the world"), always cited by Jews as the reason for their support of the left, means in the Torah, I doubt that it means supporting anti-business policies, anti-family values and a growing movement that is inhospitable—to say the least—to Israel.

Jews have an understandable worry built in from their history about religious fanaticism and right-wing politics. This leads them to spurn their strongest allies, which today are evangelical Christians. In postwar politics they never voted in any numbers for Israel's strongest presidential allies, Nixon and Bush Jr. But Jews might be wise to remember Lord Palmerston's observation about England having no eternal friends, only eternal interests. There is little point worrying about who was the enemy last decade or who is going to be the enemy the day after tomorrow. They need to find out who is the enemy—or friend—today. Fast. M

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CAPITAL DIARY

MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON A RAHIM JAFFER JOKE AND WHY NOVA SCOTIAN BILL CASEY IS SO POPULAR

GOOD SPORT MAXIME BERNIER

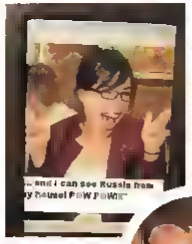
At the suggestion of Capital Diary, this year's Parliamentary Press Gallery Dinner was a different kind of night. Traditionally, party leaders have given funny speeches, but this dinner became a mock awards ceremony with lots of MPs and journalists taking to the stage (in part because fewer and fewer leaders were offering to speak at the event). **Rick Mercer** talked about all the gay staffers who work for Tory ministers [illegible]. How do I know? Just look at her hair." Other highlights included former foreign affairs minister and very good sport **Maxime Bernier** comically looking for his notes on stage. He found them and did not have to call **Julie Couillard**. Also, **Scott Brison** had some great lines: "I've put a lot of work into my speech," said the Nova Scotia Liberal MP. "In fact, I even got together with former colleague **Rahim Jaffer** to do a few lines."

HOW TO GET ELECTED IN NOVA SCOTIA WITHOUT SPENDING A DIME

The recent announcement of a by-election in Nova Scotia has all eyes in that province on one man: **Bill Casey**. Casey was the Tory MP who voted against the Conservative budget over the Atlantic accord and then sat as an Independent. He resigned this year, triggering the by-election in his old riding. He is now a Nova Scotia hero: any candidate that received his blessing would sail to victory. According to NDP MP **Megan Leslie**, "You wouldn't have to run a campaign if Bill endorsed you." Casey now works for the Nova Scotia government representing the province's interests in Ottawa, so he has to appear neutral, but politicians at all levels of government in the province are keen to score even a photo with him.













BILL CASEY and Megan Leslie (top); Maxime Bernier (middle, left); the photograph of Amber Ocean Stoffer (middle, right) and (circle inset) her father, Peter Stoffer; Nancy Ruth and the T-shirt (lower left); Justin Trudeau and Margaret Trudeau (lower right)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FROM JUSTIN

During question period **Justin Trudeau** can often be spotted signing all sorts of things. (Most MPs do this, including the PM, who has been spotted signing photos of himself.) One day Trudeau had a huge stack of cards on his desk. Every Liberal supporter in his Montreal riding, he explains, gets a personalized birthday card. Recently, Trudeau popped by the seventh annual Champions of Mental Health awards at the Fairmont Château Laurier ballroom. His mother, **Margaret Trudeau**, got an award for being open about having bipolar disorder. Also on the awards list was Defence Minister **Peter MacKay** and Gen **Walter Natynczyk**, chief of defence staff, for their work launching the Canadian Forces mental health campaign, "Be the Difference." MacKay noted that the number of health care officials hired under his watch has increased significantly. Meanwhile, on the military mission front, Natynczyk told Capital Diary that he just wrapped up the mission in Bosnia a few weeks ago. He noted that when it comes to [illegible] like to sprint, while the military run marathons.

HIS DAUGHTER AND SARAH PALIN

Sarah Palin's memoir, *Going Rogue: An American Life*, will be out soon. So which NDP MP has a photo homage of Palin in his office? Peter Stoffer's daughter, **Amber Ocean Stoffer**, once dressed up as the former Republican vice-presidential nominee, and the Nova Scotia MP keeps the snap in a prominent frame in his Hill office. She is called Amber Ocean, says Stoffer, because she was conceived on a cruise ship and the sunsets were a stunning amber colour. Stoffer has another daughter named **Jasmin Aurora Stoffer**; she was born in the Yukon during an aurora borealis.

WHAT THE SENATOR WORE

Sen. **Nancy Ruth** showed up to the weekly Conservative caucus meeting with a T-shirt under her blazer that read: "I may be wrong, but I doubt it." She showed it to a few MPs, but made sure not to flash the Prime Minister. M

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MITCHEL RAPHAEL

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Gen. **Rick Hillier** on his biggest strategic error, the Taliban's comeback, and whether Canada should stay in Afghanistan past 2011

A CONVERSATION WITH KATE FILLION

Gen. Rick Hillier was chief of defence staff from February 2005 to July 2008. As he explains in A Soldier First: Bullets, Bureaucrats and the Politics of War, *the Canadian Forces have long been underfunded, under trained, underappreciated and overextended. The most visible and outspoken CDS in recent history, Hillier sought to reverse those trends while fighting a war in Afghanistan—and, as it turned out, Ottawa.*

Q *In* A Soldier First, *you write that most Canadians do not know what the rationale behind the Afghanistan mission is. What's the biggest misperception?*

A: That everything is dark and gloomy. What Canadians hear about the mission is that Canadian soldiers have been killed, and they hear about improvised explosive devices and corruption in the government. There are some very bright spots, from the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, to the development of the Afghan national army, to the fact that two-thirds of the country now essentially runs as normal. Canadians hear not a single thing about any of that.

Q: *Whose fault is that?*

A: I start with average Canadians. They should demand that kind of information from their government when they've got their sons and daughters participating in a war. Secondly, the Afghanistan task force has a strategic communications policy, but I wonder where the communications is being done because hundreds of thousands of Canadians don't know what's happening. Thirdly, our media have not done a very good job. Very few journalists have actually been outside the wire, because their editors are very concerned about the risks and their insurance policies almost always prohibit them from going out.

Q: *Why did we first send troops to Afghanistan, in your opinion?*

A: We were going *somewhere* in 2003, just as a way to relieve the pressure of saying no to the Americans on Iraq, and it ended up being Afghanistan. But I think now we view the world through a more strategic lens: we have to bring stability to places where there's chaos, to help those areas develop.

Q: *Does Canada have a coherent strategic plan for what's going to happen post July 2011, when our troops are scheduled to pull out of Afghanistan?*

A: That's very difficult to say. I think Canadians have heard very little about it and are therefore reasonably asking, "What is the plan and what is our strategy there?" When I was chief of defence staff, our view of what we were doing was to try to help Afghans determine, with some assistance, just what it was they wanted as a country and how they wanted to live their lives. We were very, very clear on that. As President [Hamid] Karzai told me the first time I met him, "The number one threat to Afghanistan is our lack of capacity to govern ourselves, to provide jobs for the people and provide for their basic needs, and to provide for their security. The sooner we can be helped to provide those capacities, the sooner we can get going on our own."

Q: *How can you help Afghans do all that after 2011 without troops?*

A: You cannot, so the troops, if they're not Canadian, will have to come from somewhere else. Make no doubt about it: the security mission and therefore the need for forces will not be finished in southern Afghanistan in 2011. You can come up with all kinds of schemes to hide away in a camp and train people for the Afghan army or police, but they lack credibility. If you try to help train and develop the Afghan army or police in southern Afghanistan, you are going to be in combat.

Q: *Should our troops stay in Afghanistan after July 2011?*

A: Whether they should stay or not will be a decision the government of Canada will make. What I would actually like to see is a strategic discussion, not just about what we do in Afghanistan but about Canada's place in the world. But in this constant minority government, always in election campaign mode, with a very vitriolic Parliament, it's impossible to have that sort of strategic discussion. Do I think that if Canadian troops stayed on the ground we could help foster a more stable Afghanistan that would in turn be a stabilizing force in Southwest Asia and help reduce terrorists' ability to hide? Yes I do.

Q: *Do you agree with de Gaulle, that "genius sometimes consists of knowing when to stop"?*

A: I teach that as one of my leadership points. But also, you don't achieve anything by stopping at the first sign of difficulty. If we'd stopped after Dieppe in World War II, where would we be right now as a nation? If we'd stopped before Vimy Ridge, we wouldn't have been a nation at all. So yes, you've got to know when to say "stop" as a leader, you sure do, but you've also got to know when to push for the final thing that's going to give you the full benefit.

Q: *You write that when you were chief of defence staff, some of the toughest battles were fought not in Kandahar but against the bureaucracy in Ottawa.*

A: I liken it to a boa constrictor. We were at war in Afghanistan, with young men and women laying their lives on the line on a daily basis, and we were trying to move at lightning speed to give them the capabilities to reduce risks and ensure they were set up for success. What we did not see, from the vast majority of the bureaucracy back in Ottawa, was the same sense of urgency. Everything became difficult, really moved slowly, projects were often parcelled into very little bits and pieces. We had to fight a war in Ottawa to get things done, from getting the tanks upgraded to getting helicopters. We should've had those things from the time the need was identified, in weeks if not days. It took months, and in several cases years.

Q: *You once said famously, that the Taliban are "detestable murderers and scumbags." Do you still believe that?*

A: Absolutely. I spoke about people who were trying to kill Canadians' sons and daughters. I would also challenge people to come up with any other description for those who, as part of their policy, want to murder defenceless Afghan men and women.

Q: *But isn't it inevitable that we deal with the Taliban? And maybe even cede them part or all of the country?*

A: No. It's inevitable that some people from the Taliban will become engaged and get involved in the political process, just as happened in Northern Ireland. But I don't think it's inevitable that you'd cede a part of the country to the Taliban. Do you say, "This part of Afghanistan is free and equal, but in Kandahar province you're allowed to whip women because they have fingernail polish on, or their shoes make a clicking noise on the cobble stones"? I fail to see how we, as a nation that's a leader, could support something like that.

Q: *Why has the Taliban made such a comeback in Afghanistan?*

A: The intensity of [the U.S.] focus on Afghanistan started to dissipate after the successful campaign against the Taliban in late 2001, early 2002. All of a sudden the U.S. focus, including American forces and intelligence, shifted to Iraq. So [the Taliban] had a bit of a breather, they weren't being as directly targeted, they had time to rest and regroup. Then in late '03, insurgents started taking on the large U.S. military machine in Iraq, using IEDs and suicide bombers, and having some success. That gave the Taliban hope, they started to recruit more people and make more attacks, and in turn that brought in more money from the Arab world, so they started rebuilding to move back in [to Afghanistan]. That culminated around 2006. The second aspect is that NATO's strategy was incremental and therefore not conducive to keeping the Taliban off balance.

Q: *So was it a mistake for Canada to reduce its military presence in Afghanistan between 2004 and 2006?*

A: Probably the finger should be pointed at me for blame on that one. [As head of the army at the time] I successfully argued that we should reduce because the army was being run pretty hard and we hadn't really set ourselves up to do that. That was the biggest strategic error, in hindsight, that I believe I made, because as soon as we went into operational pause, the urgency of getting the army up to speed and re-equipped and getting the units full of soldiers all disappeared. And the government got used to not paying the operational costs, which in any mission are going to be plus a billion dollars, so when we went back to it, that shock of the operational cost was big. But I'm not sure we had the ability to effectively have a presence on the ground there.

Q: *NATO's new commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, is warning of "mission failure" without an additional 40 000 troops.*

A: What he's broadcast is a very commonsense, pragmatic number, focused on the south because that's where the threat is. My hat's off to him. But there is more to it than just troops, which Stan McChrystal understands really well. There are so many different countries providing reconstruction funds, and much of it is not as coherent as it should be to provide the big bang effect. Two, building a government that actually works is a piece of it, for sure, and Afghanistan really has a challenge because most of the folks with any experience building a government are either dead or living in the West, after 35 years of brutality.

Q: *What do you think of Biden's plan to scale back U.S. forces in Afghanistan and focus more on rooting out al Qaeda there and in Pakistan?*

A: Before [9/11], al-Qaeda found a home inside the Taliban dominated part of Afghanistan to regroup, plan, prepare, train and project from, and that's what allowed them to be successful in some of their efforts world wide. If you're trying to get rid of that petri dish that allowed terrorists to grow, you have to approach the entity rather than just go after the terrorists themselves.

Q: *If Obama decides against sending more troops to Afghanistan, will the Canadian mission have been in vain?*

A: Not at all. The men and women from our country have been there to help Afghans who needed some help. You talk to every single man or woman who's been there, and almost to a person you hear that they believe in their mission and continue to support it.

Q: *Given widespread fraud in the recent elections, was President Karzai the wrong guy for us to back?*

A: I think he was absolutely the right individual to coalesce Afghans and the international community in support of Afghans in 2001. But the Karzai administration appears to have a great deal of difficulty building an effective government structure that can deliver routinely what the Afghan people want and need. Obviously, given the number of contenders he had, and the results on the election side, [he] may not be the right long-term solution.

Q: *Speaking of elections, have you definitively ruled out a run for office?*

A: Yes, I have.

Q: *You're known for being tough and outspoken, but you mention tears quite often in the book. Are you really a softie?*

A: Yeah, I probably am. But I'll tell you one thing: when you have young men and women in combat operations and they lose their friends, one thing you quickly learn not to be ashamed of is tears. M



'The security mission and the need for forces will not be finished in southern Afghanistan in 2011'

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW TOLSON

WHAT HAPPENED, MICHAEL?

As Ignatieff sinks in the polls, Liberals are trying to figure out what's gone wrong

BY AARON WHERRY • "Would you like some soup, sir?"

Maybe this is tawdry, just another offering to the morning papers and evening news. Or maybe this is public service. Maybe it's exactly what he should be doing, helping his fellow man, setting an example. Either way, this is politics.

"Would you like a little soup, sir?"

It's 11:20 on the morning of Thanksgiving Sunday. Michael Ignatieff, in a white apron, is standing behind the counter at the Shepherds of Good Hope mission in Ottawa, a 20-minute walk from Parliament Hill. Men and women of various ages and in varying states file past. Behind them, three photographers click away. Ignatieff is ladling tomato and squash soup into small bowls. To his right, his wife, the exuberant former publicist Zsuzsanna Zsohar, scoops vegetables.

"Soup's pretty good," he says, "it'll warm you up."

A woman at the door, relentlessly chipper, is assuring each person who enters that the photographers won't be taking pictures of their faces. One man isn't willing to take her word for it and rather forcefully warns the photographers to stand down while he files past. It is the end of perhaps the worst week of Michael Ignatieff's political career so far. His poll numbers have never been worse, his doubters have never been louder. And in the middle of this, he looks uncomfortable.

"Would you like some soup with that, sir?" he asks.

Ignatieff stays for an hour and 14 minutes, until every person is fed. He lingers awhile to talk with the staff and then he has to go. A week later, sitting at a table just off the dining room at Stornoway, the leader of the Opposition's official residence, he tries to explain the look on his face. He acknowledges the awkwardness of the cameras. But his answer is long. He wants to explain himself fully.

"What's so puzzling about this recession is that it's largely invisible. But you go to a line like that and you suddenly see that it's not just the usual street people, it's a lot of other people who don't know how they got there, that are shocked that they're there, and I was shocked for them, I guess that that was my reaction," he says. "Shocked is not quite the word, but just, it really hits you. In the same way that in Thunder Bay it hits you. On Thursday morning we were in a lumber mill that's been closed for two years and the superintendent comes down every day just to make sure it hasn't been broken in. Brand-new machinery standing idle. And you see something on the guy's face that really hits you."

He is not yet done on this. "The great thing about politics is you get to see the country raw and unplugged. You get to see things that most other Canadians don't see," he says. "You get to live your country's life. So, I haven't had the greatest autumn, but it's an unforgettable experience and a positive one, in the sense that it deepens your sense of what your country is and what it's going through."

So here is Michael Ignatieff in October 2009. He is putting himself out there, listening, learning and talking it out. He is trying to understand all there is to understand about the country he hopes to lead and he is trying to help that country understand him. He is attempting to lead a party weighed down by history into the future. The questions are numerous, the opinions are plentiful and even Liberals are struggling to understand. But the onus remains entirely his.



DISHING IT OUT: Ignatieff and his wife, Zsuzsanna, serve up a Thanksgiving Day lunch at the Shepherds of Good Hope mission in Ottawa

PHOTOGRAPH BY ELAIR GARLE

Three years ago, he appeared smiling on the cover of this magazine beside the question of the moment: "Are you good enough for Michael Ignatieff?" Ten months into his tenure as Liberal leader, the question is now inverted—is Michael Ignatieff ever going to be good enough for us?

It has been a bizarre 10 months—from last winter's prospect of prime minister Stéphane Dion to this fall's reinvention of Prime Minister Stephen Harper as Ringo Starr in a Beatles cover band featuring Yo-Yo Ma. Through the spring, Ignatieff's Liberals were ascendant. By summer, they had stalled. And through the fall, they have wilted. They now sit as much as 15 points behind the ruling Conservatives. "It's very bad," says EKOS pollster Frank Graves. "I don't think it's permanent or indelible or irreparable, but it's very bad."

But why? "It's hard to imagine what it is he's said or done in the last month, other than threatening an election, which I think is a key factor here, to produce such a precipitous decline," Graves says. "He probably didn't deserve the high approval rating he got in the spring, but he probably doesn't deserve to be pilloried to the extent that he is right now. He's gone from being the messiah to the village idiot. It's the same guy. I'm glad it's not me, but I find it almost kind of tragic and comic the way the public looks at these things."

There are any number of explanations.

For one, there is Stephen Harper. The country has seemed to persevere through the recession and him along with it. For months, he has travelled the country handing out billions for bridges and roads. He has ventured overseas and looked as a leader does when he is seen standing beside the likes of Barack Obama. Of late, he has lamented, at every opportunity, an election. Michael Ignatieff would seem to seek. And the public has apparently agreed.

For another, obviously, there is Michael Ignatieff. He has regularly befuddled the capital—attempting, for awhile, to make question period a place of substantive inquiry, allowing several Newfoundland MPs to break with the party and cast a symbolic vote of protest against the federal budget, making demands of the Prime Minister, then accepting compromise. In Sudbury last month, Ignatieff turned and announced the Liberal Oppos

ition would from now on oppose, inviting the possibility of an election. Standing down had defined Stephane Dion's time as leader, so here was Ignatieff standing up. Only now Ignatieff's poll numbers look as bad as Dion's. He's done the opposite and wound up with the same result.

So it regularly seems to be with Ignatieff. At times there is praise, at times there is scorn, but at almost all times there is debate about where he needs to go.

"I want the Michael Ignatieff that we saw in 2005," says Martha Hall Findlay, the Liberal MP for Willowdale. "He came to the convention that we had, he gave a fabulous speech. I want that guy back."

In March 2005, when Ignatieff, not yet a declared candidate for office, addressed the national Liberal convention, he was all potential. He was touted as another Trudeau—a dashing figure of intellectual vigour. He spoke then of liberalism, social justice, national unity and education. The subjects and themes were not far from what he touts now. Perhaps something has been lost.

"Frankly, he went through a leadership battle where he talked about some things and pretty much paid a price on them. So I think you get a little gun shy," offers Rob Oliphant, the Liberal MP, friend to Ignatieff and early adherent to his cause. "The pendulum's got to swing back down into the middle where he can be his authentic self. Which is an idea guy. My hope is that he can find his authentic voice. When I listen to him at times, it's not the Michael I've heard before."

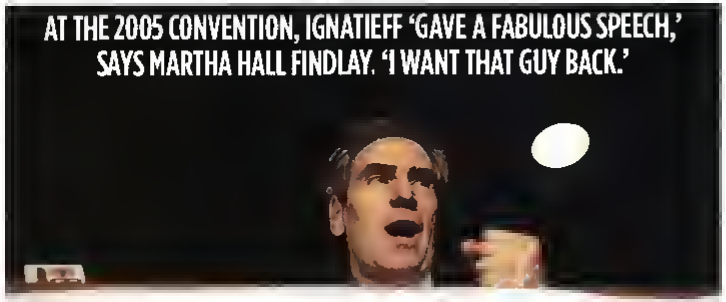
Of course, Ignatieff never was Pierre Trudeau. But then Trudeau wasn't quite what we remember him to be either. He nearly lost to the stiff and mockable Robert Stanfield in 1972 and was momentarily chased into retirement by the baby-faced and mockable Joe Clark in 1979. The legacy of Liberal leaders is complicated as such, even the sainted were once beleaguered. Jean Chrétien, the leader for whom Liberals most pine, was miserable once, too. Seven months into his leadership, the Liberals were nearly 10 points back of the NDP.

Chrétien's turning point might have been the arrival of Jean Pelletier, the "velvet executioner," to direct his office. So maybe Ignatieff needs his Pelletier. Or maybe, in fact, he just needs to trust himself. "I think there's been a natural reaction to want to look to advisers to help. And that's a good instinct," says Hall Findlay. "A really good instinct is to say, 'I'm not completely sure, I need some advice.' But the problem with that is that sometimes that can reduce your ability to rely on yourself. And I want him to start relying on himself again."

So maybe he's out-thinking himself. "Michael, his whole life, has depended on his intelligence. He is amazingly intelligent. He's also curious. He's more of a broadcast journalist than a professor. When you're with him, he actually interviews you at times," says Oliphant. "So he's depended on his intelligence and his curiosity. I think he has decided that intelligence isn't really working for him, so he's decided he has to be clever. And the people around him, I think, are trying to be clever. So they have this sort of chess game going on and they expect these certain moves and when the other side doesn't make those moves, they're kind of flummoxed. We just have to be smart. Quit trying to out-clever the other guy, because the other guy is Machiavellian, the other guy ... he'll do anything."

Maybe it is simply that the Liberal party, once a dynamic political force, seems now not to stand for anything but its past. "I think the current situation is basically the same it was six months ago, and probably pretty much the same as it was the last few years," says Ken Dryden, the Liberal MP. "The public has been saying to us for some time that we want to know what you're about. We want to know how you see the country and what a Liberal government would do. That's what the public is waiting for and we haven't given them that answer yet."

Maybe that's it. The man of ideas has to be just that. He needs to tell us what he'd do, show us his plan. Or not. "The same commentators who will write today that the Liberal party needs to put forward ideas now," says Nova Scotia Liberal MP Scott Brison, "will attack us for being politically naive and bringing them out too early when we do."



WHEN HE FIRST arrived, Ignatieff was touted as another Trudeau—a dashing figure of intellectual vigour

Michael Ignatieff is sitting back in a wooden chair, a reporter at the other end of the table. Ignatieff asks what the subject of conversation will be and laughs when informed the next half hour will have mostly to do with him. A week after the worst week of his political career, the thinker is asked, once more, to think about himself and what he must do now.

Is he, for instance, enjoying himself? "I'd be lying to you if I said I enjoyed it every day of the week," he says. "It's been the most challenging thing I've ever tried to do. When it's going well, the most fun. It's a team, you feel you're part of a team and people believe in you and we're pushing toward the same goal, which is a good, compassionate, creative, centre-of-the-road gov-

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ernment that really does good things for Canada. When it doesn't go well, you have to take responsibility."

Does he feel like he is being himself at this point? "Yes. But I think that I'm happiest when I'm more unplugged. That makes my guys a little anxious, but I'm happier when I'm unplugged," he says, smiling. "I think there's a perception that I've got overly cautious. I hope what I'm doing is getting more precise. There's quite a lot out there that, in a weird way, I've had to fight for the right to be heard."

He references here the television ads Stephen Harper's side has run, apparently to great effect, against him. "'He's just visiting



'I DON'T PRETEND TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS,' IGNATIEFF ADMITS

IGNATIEFF visited an Ottawa daycare earlier this week

BLAIR GABLE/REUTERS

He's only in it for himself.' I've had to fight to kind of say, 'Wait a minute, I'm a Canadian, I'm here to stay and here's what I've got to say.'"

Is he trying to be too clever? "If I'm trying to outsmart Mr. Harper, I'm not doing the world's greatest job, let's be clear about it," he laughs. "This is a business that teaches you humility in spades."

Maybe this is the problem right here. Maybe he's too willing to entertain these questions, too quick to be introspective and self-effacing. Maybe he should be more precise.

He speaks in his own defence. Liberal party membership, he says, has tripled. Reinvigorated fundraising has pulled the party out of debt. He understands, it seems, the primary complaint—that he has not put enough to his name, that Canadians want ideas—and much of the half-hour is filled with his vision for the country and all of the things he says he's been talking about in speeches in Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver, if only anyone would listen. He talks about child care and the paramount importance of education. He speaks of India and China and the need to realign the Canadian economy. We must decrease, he says, our dependence on fossil fuels. We must focus on energy efficiency. We need to think seriously about productivity and interprovincial energy sharing.

All of which may be noble notions, but lack the specificity now demanded. He promises more, at some point. "I got some of the things out there," he says. "There'll be more and we'll tie it up in a big bow and hand it to Canadians and say, 'There you are.'"

The last year has blurred the traditional partisan divide, so a new distinction must be made. Stephen Harper, he seems to say, is a man of today, he is a man of tomorrow. "Mr. Harper, after nearly destroying his government in December 2008, basically moved into the Liberal house. But there's no vision, absolutely no vision of where we're going to be in five, 10 years. I've talked a lot about 2017 because it's a way of focusing the mind on the question that actually bothers Canadians. The thing I pick up is relief that civilization as we know it didn't end, but the anxiety that remains for Canadians is what did we get for $56 billion, how are we going to dig ourselves out of it, and if the American market is going to be flat for three, four, five years, how do we make our living in this world?"

Discussion drifts back at several points to that Thanksgiving Sunday and those people and that soup. It was a photo op, and it was a matter of public service. But maybe it mattered for other reasons altogether. Maybe it was part of Michael Ignatieff understanding for himself, and explaining to everyone else, why he's in this game.

"I don't pretend to have all the answers. I'm still learning. And there are three or four other pieces that have to be there before Canadians start to think, 'Yeah, well, he's at least thinking about our future,'" he says, again casting forward. "He's not up there at 50,000 feet, he's trying to address the anxieties and anguish that I saw in that food line, that I see in the supervisor's face. And you have to make that connection. And it's not enough to just have lots of ideas, lots of policies. People have got to feel, 'That guy, he's in my corner. He's a little funny, he's got a funny name, he's been outside the country, but he's in my corner.' I mean, that's the connection you have to make. It's very visceral. And I feel I make the connection constantly. I don't think I'm dreaming." M

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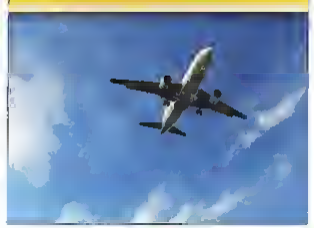
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ANNUAL FEE WAIVED WITH RBC VIP BANKING
+ 15,000
BONUS POINTS

Switch banks seamlessly with CustomSwitch®
+ 5,000
BONUS POINTS

= 35,000
RBC REWARDS POINTS

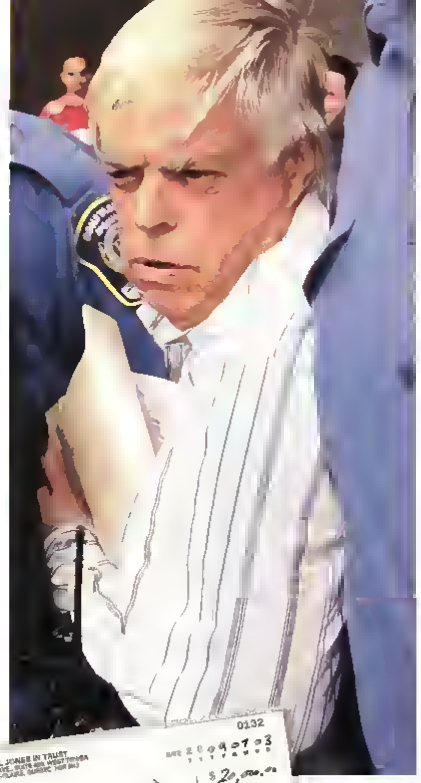
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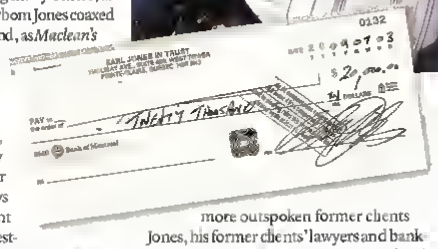


BANKING ON HIS REPUTATION

Victims of Earl Jones's alleged scam have a new target: the banks

BY MARTIN PATRIQUIN • For years, disgraced financier Earl Jones kept his alleged scam operating on little but the force of his reputation. He knew nearly all of his clients personally, rarely missing a birthday or a funeral, and was pleasant and reassuring even as he allegedly bilked them out of their life savings. Many of his former clients are still discovering the extent of the damage. "It's absolutely incredible that he didn't get caught," says Susan Brown, a six-year Jones investor who lost $300,000. His clients included his brother and godson, among many others, as well as his son-in-law, from whom Jones coaxed $150,000 earlier this year—and, as *Maclean's* recently learned, legendary hockey writer Red Fisher, who often wove tales of Jones's prowess into his columns. Jones, he wrote, was a "matchless money manager" and a "superstar investment guru" who "always has been blessed with a talent of knowing a sure-thing investment when he sees one." (Fisher won't discuss the matter, but records show he lost a sizable amount of money.)





FORMER CLIENTS of Jonas's allaga ha usad forgad cheques, and that tha banks ara liabla

Jones's personal and business assets, seized by bankruptcy trustees in August, won't come close to covering the losses of his alleged victims, thought to be upward of $86 million. So his former clients are parsing the mountains of what they allege are forged cheques, falsified documents and fudged powers-of attorney, and have found another target: the banks with whom Jones did business over the years. By not paying heed to numerous irregularities in Jones's financial activities, say lawyers for the former clients, the banks essentially allowed the fraud to continue. "His bankers seemed to trust him as his clients trusted him," says Ginny Nelles, one of the more outspoken former clients.

Jones, his former clients' lawyers and bankruptcy trustees claim, made thousands of withdrawals often totalling over $1 million a year from his Royal Bank in-trust account. Trust accounts are normally used to hold client funds that are to be invested or divested. Jones allegedly used his as a personal piggy bank to pay for cars, condos, trips and school tuition for his daughters. None of the banks he had most of his dealings with, lawyers say, appeared to notice when Jones's office (poorly) forged their signatures on dozens of cheques, and several powers of attorney, over the years.

It all served to perpetuate the myth of Earl Jones: in his clients' minds, he was a superstar whose keen investment eye was matched by his wide smile. "With Jones, you always knew everything was okay," says Christiane Jackson, a long-time investor recently forced to sell her home because of her losses.

Some clients are fighting back: as *Maclean's* has learned, 26 former investors, Jackson included, are individually going after the banks for cashing cheques allegedly falsely endorsed by Jones. As well, Stein and Stein, the law firm representing Jones's creditors, hasn't ruled out a class action lawsuit. Certainly Gilles Robillard, the bankruptcy trustee charged with overseeing the liquidation of Jones's remaining assets, believes the banks could have done more to prevent Jones's excesses. "Earl Jones has been stealing money since the early '80s, and there were tons of red flags," says Robillard. "Someone should have noticed something was wrong."

For at least 23 years, Earl Jones conducted the majority of his business transactions through an in-trust account held at the Royal Bank branch in Beaconsfield, a Montreal suburb. In the spring of 2008, Royal Bank employees noticed Jones had also used the account to pay personal expenses. According to bankruptcy documents, these included nearly $200,000 to buy the Jones family condo in Boca Raton in 1993; $212,000 to pay for his daughter's condo in Hyannis Port, Mass., in 1997; and a $170,000 bank draft Jones wrote to himself in April 2008. This was a long-standing practice, says Robillard: in 1987, for example, Jones's personal expenses paid through the RBC trust account totalled roughly $775,000. He would typically take significant sums, sometimes upward of $200,000 a year, out of the account with his ATM card. Withdrawing money "sometimes seemed like it was a full-time job" for Jones, says Robillard.

"Normally, there should be a mechanism in a bank so that when this kind of thing happens, a red light goes on," said National Revenue Minister Jean-Pierre Blackburn last month. Royal Bank apparently didn't investigate the irregularities, however. When, in the fall of 2008, the bank noticed what a spokesperson called a "few transactions [that] did not comply with the rules," officials merely advised Jones to switch from an in-trust account to a commercial account, which he did. On Aug. 27, shortly after the change, Louise Voyer, then an employee of Jones's, sent out a letter to Jones's clients. "Our Royal Bank has offered additional benefits relating to our accounts," it reads, directing clients to replace their existing interest cheques with ones drawn from the commercial account. For their part, Royal Bank officials say they didn't suspect trouble because "the transaction activity was consistent with the information we received about the nature of Mr. Jones's business," said spokesperson Stephanie Lu, noting the matter "was still under investigation."

Soon after, Jones opened another account at the Bank of Montreal branch in Pointe Claire, near Jones's office. Despite it being a commercial account, Jones had "Earl Jones In Trust" printed on his cheques. The ruse apparently worked: every former client contacted by *Maclean's* was under the impression that the BMO account was in trust. Even Neil Stein, the lawyer representing Jones's creditors, thought the BMO account was in trust until *Maclean's* told him otherwise. The distinction is important, as in-trust accounts are far more difficult to establish, and usually (though not always) audited. "If the bank is cashing cheques knowing they're marked 'in trust' it could have a problem," said Stein, when informed of the discrepancy.

BMO doesn't think so, however. Spokesperson Ronald Monet said the bank isn't responsible for what its clients have printed on their cheques. "We are of the opinion that we are not liable in this matter," he said.

This wasn't the only irregularity. Between 2005 and 2006 Jones set up nine mortgages valued at nearly $2 million through the BMO branch in St-Therese. It is an odd choice: St-Therese is a 40-minute drive from Jones's office, while the Beaconsfield BMO branch is practically within spitting distance. In each of those cases, Jones convinced his clients to remortgage with BMO St Thérèse's financial services manager Petra Choryza. One client, Beverley Hamilton, took out a $100,000 mortgage in the spring of 2005 and invested the proceeds into a Jones fund that, Jones promised, had a higher rate of return than the cost of the mortgage. She says she never went to the bank, and that Jones handled all the documents. In May 2009, says Hamilton, the payments on the mortgage mysteriously and unexpectedly jumped from approximately $750 to $950. When she called the bank to inquire, Choryza said it was the bank's error, and that she would fix the problem. As it turned out, it wasn't an error, when news of Jones's crash hit this past summer, Hamilton found out her $100,000 mortgage was actually a $125,000 mortgage. "We don't know how that happened," says Brook Hamilton, Beverley's son. "She never signed anything other than the $100,000 mortgage in 2005."

BMO has since given Beverley Hamilton, as well as several other debtors with its St Thérèse branch, a year-long deferral on their mortgage payments. (ScotiaBank, another lender who had numerous dealings with Jones over the years, has done the same in several cases.) The interest on these loans continues to pile up, however, something Brook Hamilton likens to "a year-long stay of execution." *Maclean's* calls to Choryza over the past several months have gone unanswered, and she recently took an indefinite leave from work. BMO's Monet says she had surgery.

ALLEGED victims protest outsida Jones's bankruptcy haaring



'THERE WERE TONS OF RED FLAGS AND SOMEONE SHOULD HAVE NOTICED'

Then there is the allegation of forged cheques, something with which Robert and Joanna Earle are all too familiar. The Earles have known Jones for 40 years, and began investing with him in 1993. In August 2008, Jones suggested they sell their investments and move the proceeds from an RBC investment account to a temporary account at the RBC Beaconsfield branch, whereupon it would be transferred to a broker of Jones's acquaintance. "His reasoning was that the money wasn't properly invested to weather the downturn, and that the fees were going up on the investment account," says Joanna Earle.

The couple didn't blink when Jones asked them to sign a letter authorizing him to do so on their behalf. Jones, after all, was practically family. The Earles had been to Thanksgiving dinner at Jones's house, vacationed with his family in Cape Cod, and attended the weddings of both of his daughters. "His kids knew us as Uncle Bob and Aunt Joanna," Joanna says.

Between September and November 2008 nearly $870,000 of the couple's investments were liquidated. The Earles thought Jones had transferred the funds to their new accounts by cheque. But as they recently learned, the cheques were endorsed to Jones's business account with what they say is a forgery. "That's not my signature," says Joanna of one of the endorsements. "And that's not my husband's. It's a scribble, but it's not his scribble. Earl Jones, or someone in his office, forged our signatures."

The couple signed affidavits declaring as much and filed a complaint with the Royal Bank. In September, the bank informed them reimbursement wasn't forthcoming. "RBC has concluded that your claim does not meet the requirements of 'forged endorsement' as you authorized Earl Jones or Earl Jones Consultant and Administration Corporation to negotiate the cheques on your behalf," wrote RBC commercial markets vice-president Ghassan Deko. (Royal Bank officials wouldn't comment on the alleged forgeries.)

The Earles are among the 16 now seeking legal action against the Royal Bank and BMO for forged signatures on cheques. "A bank is always liable under any defence if it pays under a forged signature," says Keith Wilson, a securities and finance lawyer with Montreal law firm Heenan Blaikie. "If Earl Jones forged an endorsement and it's within the relevant limitations period, the bank is liable." If that's so, Earl Jones's former clients might well have a case. M

SHAUN BEST/REUTERS

GRAHAM HUGHES/CP

FOR THE RECORD

BILL CLINTON'S CANADIAN ENVY

"There were many occasions when leaders of the Republican party suggested that I might want to move to Canada. And many when I thought it wasn't a bad idea."—Former U.S. president Bill Clinton, while accepting an honorary doctorate from McGill University on Oct. 16. After he was presented with a red-and-white degree hood, Clinton spoke for more than an hour, without notes, about topics ranging from Canadian federalism to global warming.

The cheques aren't the real scandal



ANDREW COYNE

It was as predictable as the tides. Could anyone have imagined otherwise—that billions of dollars could be pushed out the door in such fantastic haste, to no plan or purpose, *without* being turned into a politicized slush fund? Can anyone really claim to be surprised? When did any government, given control of a honey pot of this size, *not* abuse it?

We should be precise about just what is the scandal here. The scandal is not that Conservative MPs attached the party logo to the giant novelty cheques that have become the standard prop in government spending announcements. Though it is surely scandalous to pretend the public's money is the party's (the reverse is more nearly true), the logo only serves to make explicit what is implicit in all such exercises: that the flow of public funds to a given riding, province, industry or cause is owing entirely to the personal munificence of local MPs, who salute themselves for their generosity and compassion in the hope that their beneficiaries will be moved to do the same. That would have been the message even had there been no Conservative logos on the cheques, or no such cheques to bear them.

Likewise, while it compounds the offence for MPs to be involved in such announcements—as legislators, they're supposed to be holding the executive to account for how it spends the public's money, not taking a hand in it themselves—it is scarcely less unseemly for cabinet ministers to be passing themselves off as latter day Lorenzo de Medicis in this way. And while the revelations of partisan preference in the distribution of the funds (the *Ottawa Citizen* and Halifax *Chronicle Herald* have reported that 57 per cent of the larger "stimulus" grants went to Conservative ridings, though these are just 46 per cent of the total) add weight to the charges, it would hardly have been better had the pork been spread more evenly—had the Conservatives been engaged in purchasing the loyalty of other ridings rather than simply rewarding that of their own.

No, the scandal is more fundamental than that. It is the whole underlying premise that's rotten: that the business of MPs is to bring home the bacon, that their success or failure should be measured, not on their record as legislators for the nation as a whole, but as contestants in a perpetual free for all, each seeking to snatch the spoils of state from the rest. Thus it was often said when the scandal broke that, while the explicit use of the Conservative logo "crossed the line," there was nothing wrong with MPs claiming credit for bringing government spending to their riding—that indeed *that was their job*. No, I'm sorry, that is exactly what's wrong.

To be sure, it is a disgrace for politicians to view the public's money as their own, as it is for them to encourage others to believe the same. But they would not do so if it didn't work. If we did not consistently reward them for this behaviour, even demand it. The scandal, that is, is us. The parties treat us like cheap whores because, at bottom, we are.

It isn't that we can be, as the saying has it, bribed with our own money. Canadians are not such simpletons as that. Rather, we suppose we are being bribed with other people's money—that the amounts on those novelty cheques come to us, if not from the benevolence of our local MP, then at least from those suckers in other parts of the country, the same ones we curse for filching from our pockets. So all parts of the country are simultaneously convinced both that they are making out at the others' expense, and that the others are making out at theirs.

That isn't to let the Conservatives off the hook. Part of the inevitability of this scandal is the remorseless tragedy of Conservative decline. That the Conservatives should lately have compromised their ethical standards is wholly of a piece with their earlier compromises on policy. Both find a common source in expediency, in the belief that everything must be subordinated to the overarching goal of power. Each little compromise of belief, each small betrayal of principle, each tiny ethical shortcut is justified by the last, and each added to the rest, until at last there's nothing left of any of them: beliefs, principles or ethics. No, this is not the sponsorship scandal—yet. But this is how sponsorship scandals *begin*.

Some Conservatives at least have the decency to look uneasy at what their party has become, but the majority are too giddy with self-deceit even to notice. If they have any doubts, they are resolved by appeal to the supreme necessity of winning, by any means, at any cost. But in fact it still matters how you win. It matters, because how far you will go to win the battle will determine what is left when it's over—because how you win, in the end, is what you win.

As for the Liberals, they have no credibility on this issue whatsoever, given their track record. Does anybody in this country think they would do any differently, once in power? (That is the most frustrating part of this: each party comes into power vowing to clean up the mess left by the previous government, only to end up using the other's excesses to justify its own.) If they want to be taken seriously, they have to tell us three things: 1) whether they would put a stop to this sort of partisan use of public funds, 2) precisely how, and 3) why on earth we should believe their answers to 1 and 2. M



CONSERVATIVE MP Gerald Keddy (left) displays a novelty cheque

The underlying premise is that it is MPs' business to bring home the bacon

ON THE WEB: For more Andrew Coyne visit his blog at **www.macleans.ca/aadrewcoyne**

H1N1 puts HPV vaccine on the shelf



Girls in New Brunswick will get the HPV shot, but not this year

BY KATE LUNAU • As New Brunswick prepares to inoculate residents against swine flu, another public health program is falling by the wayside. Hundreds of health care workers, from nursing students to retirees, are being recruited to administer the H1N1 vaccine—meaning the HPV vaccine must be put on hold. This year, about 2,500 Grade 7 girls will not receive a shot to protect them from the human papilloma virus, which can cause genital warts and cervical cancer.

According to the "Canadian Cancer Statistics" report, about seven Canadians per 100,000 were diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2005, the most recent year for which data is available. Thanks to the HPV vaccine, "it's the first genital cancer that's preventable," says Dr. André Lalonde, executive vice-president of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada. As such, he notes, "it's a major breakthrough in health."

In New Brunswick, girls who were scheduled to get the vaccine this year will still get it, emphasizes Dr. Paul van Buynder, the province's deputy chief medical officer of health, but it will be one year late: next year, both Grade 7 and Grade 8 girls will be vaccinated. Provincial officials, he says, had to determine "which programs could safely be deferred." (New Brunswick isn't alone, in Ontario, for example, some public health units are delaying HPV vaccination to focus on swine flu.)

Cécile Bensimon, a bioethicist with the University of Toronto's Joint Centre for Bioethics, calls it "triage on a larger scale." While delaying the HPV shot might put some young girls at risk (likely not many, since most aren't sexually active in Grade 7), the decision must be made from a "population based perspective," she says. As an example, she notes that during the SARS crisis, procedures like elective surgeries were temporarily put on hold—for the greater good. M

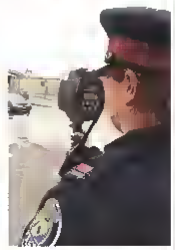
TORONTO STAR DANIEL DESLAURIERS/AGENCE QMI

Street racer or good samaritan?

BY MICHAEL FRISCOLANTI • To quote the justice of the peace, "this is a highly unusual case." It all began in the early morning hours of Feb. 24, 2008, when an Ontario man, Taki Christopoulos, was driving home from his cousin's house in downtown Toronto. As his blue BMW headed north of the city, another driver pulled up beside the car, extended his middle finger—and waved a gun. Here's the really unusual part: when Christopoulos phoned 911 to report the incident, the operator told him to "get the plate" of the other vehicle. So he hit the gas pedal.

Unfortunately for him, a traffic cop noticed both cars barrelling down the freeway—and pulled over the wrong bad guy. Christopoulos was charged with "chasing"—a violation of Ontario's new stunt driving law—and lost his licence, and his bimmer, for seven days.

Come trial, Christopoulos assumed he had an ironclad excuse: *I was simply doing what the 911 dispatcher instructed me to do.* In legal jargon, such a defence is known as "officially induced error." But the strategy didn't work. The officer, Const. Sven Wiggermann, testified that the BMW weaved from lane to lane, and at one point was clocked at a whopping 168 km/h. Christopoulos refutes the radar reading (he insists he never topped 120 km/h), but the court sided with the Crown. "The advice received was simply to 'get the plate' of the driver who brandished a gun," ruled Mary Ross Hendriks, a Toronto justice of the peace. "It was akin to a discussion with an appropriate official, not authorization to engage in high speed pursuit."



A motorist told to 'get the plate' of a dangerous driver sped into trouble

Christopoulos, who was fined $2,000, has filed an appeal. "He accelerated briefly to try and obtain the plate, and then slowed right back down when he realized the other vehicle was going much too fast," says his paralegal, Phil Alexiu. "And the only reason he even accelerated was because he was directed by 911 to see if he could obtain the plate." M

Dastardly deeds done door-to-door

BY MARTIN PATRIQUIN • Laurent Paquette apparently knows it's easier to steal the message than to shoot the messenger. Last week, the outgoing mayor of Ste. Agathe, a resort town of 9,000 located 90 km north of Montreal, was caught on tape removing the election pamphlets of mayoral candidate Gilles Legault from voters' mailboxes and doors. Yvon Dore, a Legault campaign worker, shot the video after noticing the disappearance of Legault's election pamphlets. "We'd meet people who we knew and asked them if they got our pamphlets and they said no," Doré says. "It was too much to be a coincidence, especially since we'd seen Paquette's team on the same streets as us."



Candidate Legault (left) accuses a rival of stealing pamphlets

In the video, which includes Doré running from behind bushes and driveways while filming the mayor, Paquette is seen going door-to-door in Ste-Agathe with Serge Bosse (the two men are running for city council in the Nov. 1 election, under a team led by mayoral hopeful Denis Chalifoux). Paquette can be seen removing Legault's election pamphlets—documents that Dore himself had previously placed in mailboxes. "It's nice to see you, Mr. Paquette," Dore says when confronting the mayor on tape. "You have to be goddamn dishonest to do that, you know." Dore then asks Paquette to give back the pamphlets, which the mayor does.

When contacted, Paquette was cagey about the incident. "I won't answer any questions until I verify that you are indeed from *Maclean's*," the mayor said. He didn't call back.

Doré has filed a complaint with the Sûrete du Québec, and hopes to see Paquette expelled from the race. "It's a travesty of democracy," he says. He's not quite correct: according to the province's election authority, to whom Doré also complained, removing an opponent's election material is little more than vandalism. M





ARMY TROOPS HEAD out to patrol curfew on the edge of South Waziristan (left), policemen guard two suspects in Karachi

TAKING ON THE TALIBAN

Is Pakistan's new strategy to push its Taliban into Afghanistan?

BY ADNAN R. KHAN • Something is seriously wrong when Afghans start looking at Pakistan as the regional war zone. It may sound strange, but that is exactly what has happened. Afghans are looking over the border at Pakistan and thinking, "Glad I'm not there." Pakistanis are looking over at Afghanistan and wondering, "How did this happen?" More than three years ago, NATO troops, led by Canada and Britain, were moving into southern Afghanistan with a single-minded determination to take on the Taliban in their home territory. Now, Pakistan is following suit, rolling into South Waziristan in what its politicians are calling the "decisive blow" to their own Taliban menace. The aptly named Rah i Nijat operation, meaning "Path to Deliverance," that was launched on Oct. 17 is not dissimilar to NATO's push into southern Afghanistan back in 2006. The South Waziristan Agency is the hive where the most die-hard of Pakistan's Taliban fighters reside, including the much-feared Mehsud groups, and where foreign jihadis, mainly Uzbeks, have claimed their own mini-fiefdom, injecting a toxic mix of brutality and suicidal determination into the local Pashtun society.

There is, however, a critical difference to the two operations. NATO commanders hoped to deliver an actual death blow to the Taliban. Pakistan appears to be simply trying to push its own Taliban into Afghanistan.

It is, what many observers have noted, Pakistan's endgame. Since Western forces removed the Afghan Taliban from power in 2001, Pakistani security forces have been desperately searching for a way to re-establish some measure of Taliban influence in Afghanistan, having supported that regime not just as a like-minded, conservative ally, but also as a bulwark against the spreading influence of arch-enemy India. During those early days, the army was deployed in support of Afghan Taliban fighters fleeing from their homeland. Fittingly, Waziristan was where some of those Pakistani troops were sent, to a small, never-before-heard-of village on the Afghan border called Shawal. There, they protected the Afghan Taliban fighters and gave them sanctuary. With the support of local tribesmen, who themselves were Taliban supporters, the army reportedly allowed Shawal to be used as a base of operations for the Afghan Taliban against the invading foreigners.

The fleeing Taliban had also brought with them foreign fighters. Pakistan, under extreme pressure from the Bush administration, joined the war on terror. But extremism had also been building in Pakistan, a trend hastened by the arrival of hardened Islamic fighters from Afghanistan. Now, the alliance with Washington sparked a backlash from the brooding jihadis being groomed in Pakistan's tribal belt. Some of those jihadis of the emerging Pakistani Taliban turned their guns on Pakistan. It may seem contradictory, but even as the Pakistani security services worried about their new homegrown version of the Taliban, they continued to secretly support the Afghan Taliban, in the hopes that someday they would again have a say in Afghan affairs.

But things got out of hand: the Pakistani Taliban, Pakistan's generals soon realized, had developed some bite. Now, the current operation in Waziristan is being hailed as Pakistan's response. The military has had enough. They will put an end to the menace.

LIAZ MUHAMMAD/CP

AKHTAR SOOMRO/REUTERS

But how? And how will this affect affairs in Afghanistan, and Pakistan's policy toward its neighbour?

Based on the scale of the operation, it hardly appears like the definitive blow against the Taliban menace. Pakistan is sending in 28,000 troops (fully 15,000 participated in the recent and much smaller-scale offensive against the Taliban in the Swat valley—a sign that the military took that campaign seriously). That works out to approximately two per cent of its total military, reserve and paramilitary personnel, against an estimated 10,000 hard-core militants and an unknown number of auxiliaries, including numerous potential suicide bombers. Even by the Pakistani army's own acknowledgement, this is a limited engagement, targeting only those groups that pose a threat to Pakistan. But mapping Pakistan's strategy reveals some interesting dynamics: moving in from three directions—the north, the south and the east—the army appears to be pushing Taliban militants toward the mountainous border with Afghanistan's Paktika province—directly, in fact, toward Shawal. The logic behind the strategy is obvious: with winter approaching, trap militants in the mountains, leaving them with two choices. One is to stay on the Pakistani side of the border and fight, which would give a massive advantage to Pakistan, considering its air and artillery power, as well as the army's extensive experience in fighting high-altitude, winter battles in Kashmir. The second is to escape across the border to Afghanistan.

Maj.-Gen. Athar Abbas, the Pakistani army spokesman, says that is unlikely. "We have cut off all escape routes," he says, a claim widely believed to be sketchy at best. Shawal has proven to be a difficult region to control, even by the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. troops operating on the other side of the border. With the limited resources Pakistan has committed to the Waziristan operation, most of which will be needed to actually fight the Taliban, it seems unlikely they would be in a position to also seal off the border.

The net result would be that the Pakistani Taliban becomes, if only for a while, Afghanistan's problem, bringing further destabilization to that country's fractious south—and the prospect that the newly arrived fighters might even take part in the Afghan insurgency. From a strictly self-interested perspective, that of course works nicely to Pakistan's advantage as it continues to support the Afghan Taliban. This is, according to many observers, exactly what Pakistan has been hoping to achieve for years. Since major offensives against the Taliban began, starting with the Bajaur offensive in the summer of 2008, the Pakistani military has limited its targets to militant groups who directly threaten Pakistan itself. Others have been left alone: groups in Waziristan led by commanders like Maulvi Nazir, Hafiz Gul Bahadur, and Sirajuddin Haqqani, who have repeatedly said they do not consider Pakistan their enemy, and instead direct their attacks on ISAF and U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

Indeed, in the lead-up to the Waziristan operation, Pakistani authorities reportedly struck a deal with Bahadur and Nazir in which the two commanders have vowed to not participate in the battle, in exchange for the army reducing its presence in areas they control. Abbas, the army spokesman, vehemently denies the existence of any such deal. "No. Not true," he said. "No deal has been struck with any group." Pakistani intelligence officials in Peshawar, however, speaking on condition of anonymity, have confirmed to *Maclean's* that



TWIN BOMBINGS in Islamabad killed seven, including the bombers. Suicide attacks are now almost daily occurrences in Pakistan

ANJUM NAVEED/CP

such a deal was reached weeks ago.

For the Pakistani army, the agreement is necessary. Past operations in Waziristan have proven that the region is vastly more difficult to tame than an area like Swat, where Taliban-aligned militants were relatively easily dislodged and scattered. In Waziristan, even if Pakistan had committed substantially more troops, pursuing an objective to completely wipe out the Taliban would be unrealistic, leading to a long and bloody battle with the potential to demoralize the Pakistani army and further destabilize a shaky government in Islamabad.

Instead, Pakistan appears to be taking the path of least resistance and maximum strategic advantage. The Taliban continue to be viewed as an asset in Afghanistan, where Pakistani interests are inextricably woven with the movement's survival in the face of increasing Indian influence in Kabul.

But for ISAF troops in Afghanistan, including Canadians based in Kandahar, the possibility of new fighters arriving from Pakistan represents a clear danger. Interestingly, in what appears to be an attempt to divert attention from Pakistan's duplicity, Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, the country's chief of army staff, has accused ISAF forces in Afghanistan of abandoning border posts in the region, saying that could allow Afghan Taliban to flood *in* to Pakistan to support their brethren. (That allegation, of course, undermines Abbas's claim that the Pakistani military has cut off all escape routes out of the country—presumably those routes also serve as entry points into Pakistan, and if the military were indeed in control of them they could also keep out incoming militants.) According to an ISAF spokesman in Afghanistan, the international coalition does not man border posts, that is left to the Afghan border police. In response to Kayani's allegation, the spokesman adds: "We would only comment on that if there were substance to it."

PAKISTANI SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR A WAY TO RE-ESTABLISH A MEASURE OF TALIBAN INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN

In fact, the suggestion borders on the surreal. Pakistani authorities are now implying that the U.S.-backed coalition is helping the fundamentalist Taliban destabilize Pakistan. But it is to a degree a sign of how dysfunctional the relationship between Pakistan and the West has become. For months, ties have been eroding as the U.S. administration has tightened the screws on aid money for Pakistan, and continued to accuse its security services, singling out the Inter Services Intelligence spy agency, of maintaining links with militant groups.

Meanwhile, the public mood in Pakistan is approaching near panic levels. Suicide attacks are an almost daily occurrence, with twin bombings in Islamabad on Tuesday killing seven, including the two suicide bombers. There is of course no guarantee that Pakistan's strategy in Waziristan will put an end to the violence. Violent extremists remain entrenched in Punjab and in the southern port city of Karachi. Another group has emerged on the southwestern border with Iran—the Sunni extremist group Jundallah, meaning "the Soldiers of God." It has been blamed for an Oct. 18 suicide attack on Iranian Revolutionary Guards in the Iranian border city of Pishin that killed 60 people. In response, Iran, which was to deliver some $300 million worth of aid to Pakistan, has threatened to end that flow, even as the official news agency called on Iranian security forces "to seriously deal with Pakistan once and for all."

The developments have left many Pakistanis wondering how much more their country can take. Still, very few are willing to blame the army, long considered the only barrier standing in the way of the nation's total collapse. Some, however, are starting to realize that the military must shoulder some of the blame for Pakistan's current crisis. "If they don't stop playing these games, then there will be grave consequences," says Aqil Shah, a senior member of the provincial government in the country's northwest. "It will mean the end of the nation. The time for games is over." M

SECOND-RATE CITIZENS

Discrimination of Slovakia's Hungarian minority is on the rise

BY ANNA PORTER • On Aug. 25, 2006, an ethnic Hungarian student named Hedvig Malina was severely beaten and robbed in the city of Nitra, Slovakia, after she spoke Hungarian on her cellphone. "Slovakia without parasites" was written on her clothes when she first reported her injuries to authorities. A two week long police investigation ended without charges, while at the same time the minister of the interior stepped in front of TV cameras to announce that Malina's claims were baseless and accused her of making up the whole incident. In May 2007, Malina was indicted for perjury. Amid cries of outrage and charges of political interference, Malina appealed her case at the Constitutional Court. And in 2008, she took her case to the European Court of Human Rights.

On Sept. 12, 2009, ignoring the laws about presumptions of innocence, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, a former stalwart of the pre-'89 Communist party who now heads the Smer (Direction) party, accused Hedvig Malina of inflicting her own injuries in order to create an anti-Slovak atmosphere. (Oddly enough, from 1994 till 2000, Fico represented Slovakia at the European Court of Human Rights, a fact that says as much about that judicial body as it does about the task of monitoring human rights offences by member states.) But Fico's comment should come as no surprise—the bad blood goes back centuries. The Hungarian monarchy ruled the Slovaks for a millennium until the end of the First World War, while the Hungarian minority that was left in what became Czechoslovakia suffered discrimination throughout the last century. "We are victims of an accident of history," says one Hungarian member of the Slovak parliament. "For about 1,000 years, until 1919, this was all part of the kingdom of Hungary, and since then Slovaks have been seeking new ways to deal with that fact."

What is troubling, though, is the way current Slovak politicians are playing the anti-Hungarian card and stoking nationalist sentiment, at a time when the global recession has crippled parts of eastern Europe and unleashed a wave of discontent. The 2006 election campaign that brought Fico to power, and Slovak President Ivan Gasparovic's 2009 re-election campaign, thrived on open attacks against the country's minority Hungarians (around 10 per cent of the population, though the number may be higher as some Hungarians are now billing themselves as Slovaks).

Fico's coalition partners, among them Jan Slota's extreme nationalists and the party of former prime minister Vladimir Meciar, express similar sentiments. Slota has called Hungarians bandy legged marauders, and in one memorable speech incited Slovaks to "get in tanks and level Budapest." Meciar has talked of a Hungarian threat to Slovak territories that had once been part of Hungary, and, in a not-so-veiled reference to the deportation of some 70,000 Hungarians in 1945, offered a population transfer of Slovak-Hungarians across the border to Hungary. And the xenophobia has found a welcoming echo among Slovaks who have not received their expected rewards from the capitalist transformation and Slovakia's recent membership in the EU.

The government has even legislated against the Hungarian minority. On Sept. 1, its new language law came into force, imposing hefty fines (as high as $8,000) on workplaces where employees use their own minority language for "official" business. For example, a Hungarian doctor treating a Hungarian patient must speak Slovak unless they live in an overwhelmingly Hungarian area of the country. All dealings with public officials must be in Slovak, irrespective of the fact that in towns along the country's southern border, most people speak Hungarian. All signs, monuments and even tombstones, no matter how ancient, must show a priority Slovak version. Street signs are to be changed. All cultural events must have simultaneous Slovak translation (imagine poetry evenings with Slovak translation services for an all-Hungarian audience). There are odd exceptions for places where at least 80 per cent of the population is Hungarian, but it is unclear how that is calculated.

And meanwhile, tensions have continued to rise. A November 2008 match in the majority Hungarian city of Dunaszerdahely, between its soccer team and Slovan Bratislava from the country's capital, was disrupted by Slovak riot police, who managed to injure more than 50 people, all of them reportedly Hungarians. Peter Pázmány, the former mayor of Dunaszerdahely (Dunajska Streda on Slovak maps),



MEMBERS of Slovakia's ultra-right at the 70th anniversary celebration of the Slovak state in Bratislava

SAMUEL KUBANI/GETTY

was there with his son. The police, he says, were not locals. They were brought in to create an incident. "My family has lived here for 600 years and no matter what happens we are not leaving," he told me. They were among those to be deported to Hungary after the Second World War as part of a series of "population exchanges," but his mother bribed the soldiers. His father lost his lands and worked as a bricklayer, but he would not give up and would not leave. "We have a strong attachment to this land," Pázmany says. "Our ancestors' graves are here. It is where we belong."

Some Slovaks want to change that. On Aug. 21, Hungarian President Laszlo Solyom was to speak at the unveiling of a statue of St. Stephen, the first Hungarian king, in Komárno (the Slovak part of the ancient Hungarian town of Komarom). A crowd of a few hundred people waited on the square—"an atmos-





FICO (above) was elected in 2006; riot police (right) disrupted a soccer match last fall

phere of celebration for both Hungarians and Slovaks," Tunde Lelkes, a young lawyer from Komárno told me. "St. Stephen had, after all, been honoured by both Slovaks and Hungarians as a just king." Then a busload of hooligans arrived. They started heckling, waving placards and shouting insults. Meanwhile, the police stopped Solyom's car at the border and told him he would not be allowed to enter Slovakia, despite the EU's core principle of freedom of movement and a civic invitation.

Fico was characteristically unrepentant. He said the day chosen for the unveiling was unsuitable, as it was also the anniversary of Warsaw Pact forces (including Hungarians) invading Czechoslovakia to end Alexander Dubcek's "Prague Spring." Fico did meet with Hungarian Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai in the Hungarian border town of Szécsény on Sept. 10, and the two leaders pledged to begin efforts to tackle extremism in the region. But, says Hungarian book publisher László Szigeti, it is odd that Fico would choose to deal with the PM of another country about his own country's minority laws, rather than engaging with his minority Hungarians.

Calmer Slovak heads are trying to prevail. According to a recent opinion piece in the *Slovak Spectator*, Slovak politics "can tolerate quite a lot without suffering fatal effects. But people like Slota are a dangerous infection whose behaviour can cause serious deformation of the system." Leading Slovak intellectuals have warned in an open letter published in the liberal daily *Sme* that

ALL SIGNS, MONUMENTS AND EVEN TOMBSTONES MUST SHOW A PRIORITY SLOVAK VERSION

the racist, xenophobic rhetoric used by the country's politicians is making the country sink to "a dangerous level."

Martin Simecka, a Slovak and former editor of both *Sme* and the weekly magazine *Respekt*, says the new laws are intended to show Hungarians living in Slovakia that they are second-rate citizens. They are meant to feel afraid. And they do. Three ethnic Hungarian high school students I met in Bratislava said they are now scared to speak Hungarian on buses, that they are wary of giving their Hungarian-sounding names, that they would not make cellphone calls home in Hungarian, and that they are worried when they see Slovak flag-waving young men. But not one of them has given a thought to moving to another country.

Book publisher Szigeti's small office is not far from historic Michael's Gate in the Old Town of Bratislava. He publishes in both languages, and his friends are members of both communities. His family is from Dunaszerdahely, he defines himself as Hungarian, though he was born after the Second World War in Czechoslovakia. "My life's purpose, if I may say so without becoming pompous," he tells me as he leans back against the wide bookcase displaying both Slovak and Hungarian titles, "is to hold a mirror to each, so they can see how they seem to the other." Though it has become a Sisyphean struggle, he is sure it will, eventually, succeed.

Ethnic Hungarian parliamentarian Miklós Duray is not so sure. In recent years, he says, many Slovak politicians have chosen to fuel anti-Hungarian sentiments—a useful political ploy, especially during recessionary times, to unite the electorate for their own gains. But the battle for Hungarian minority rights—their own schools, newspapers, books, street signs—has been ongoing since 1920. Indeed, Duray was arrested in 1982 for his human rights activities, including organizing to keep what rights the Hungarian minority had during the Communist regime. In his book *Kutyaszorito* (*Choke Collar*), he writes about the indignities of house searches, beatings, and the terrible boredom of 470 days in jail.

More recently, Duray has been in trouble for labelling Slota's party as fascist three years ago. He was convicted of sullying its reputation. His apology was written in Hungarian, now the party wants it reissued in Slovak, and he is being threatened with a $50,000 fine. But Duray is not about to give up now that Slovakia is a self-declared democracy. "The right to free expression has been used here to express hatred," he says. "To unite a people, what is simpler than to identify a common enemy?" The good news, Duray says with a smile, is that in his view, "Slovaks do not have a natural antipathy toward Hungarians. In time, they may decide to change governments."

Hedvig Malina, in the meantime, completed her degree, married her ethnic Slovak boyfriend, and gave birth to their healthy Slovak-Hungarian baby. M

Anna Porter, the author of Kasztner's Train *(2007), is currently researching a new book about central Europe*

THE ISSUE IN...

GERMANY: THOSE COMMUNIST CLOWNS

West German spies were once instructed to gather intelligence on jokes being told in Communist East Germany, according to recently released files. Jokes like this one: "What would happen if the desert became Communist? Nothing for a while, then there would be a sand shortage." The joke report wasn't just part of a plan to understand East Germans, it was the spies' most popular service. Said one former spook: "It was our biggest hit."

KONSTANTIN CHERNICHKIN/REUTERS; ANDRAS GAL/GETTY

Filmmaker turned enemy of the state

BY TOM HENHEFFER • Art has become scary reality for Narges Kalhor. After the Iranian director travelled to Nuremberg earlier this month to screen her new film, *Darkhish* (*The Rake*), at the Perspektive International Human Rights Film Festival, she was told that she was not welcome back in her home country.

Kalhor, 25, the daughter of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's media and cultural adviser, is an avid supporter of the Iranian



Narges Kalhor, the daughter of an Iranian official, can't go home

opposition and one of the thousands of youths that demonstrated after the country's controversial elections in August. *Darkhish* is an allegory for the current malaise in Iran: it tells the story of a society where a machine acts as judge, jury and executioner, and tortures people to death the moment they are pronounced guilty. "It is a commentary on a situation where torture is being used, where the legal system has been hollowed out," says Andrea Kuhn, the festival's director.

The filmmaker hoped to quietly show her movie in Germany and return to Iran. But word of her anti-torture film leaked onto the Internet, and Kalhor was threatened with arrest were she to fly home. "I was told that it would be better not to come home and that if I went back now I would be met at the airport by the secret police," she told the German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*. "I have no options. I cannot go back to Iran."

Kalhor is living in a refugee centre near Nuremberg while she waits to see whether her application for political asylum will be accepted. "She's very sad, she's very confused and very frightened," says Kuhn. But Kalhor's trials have made her a hero for the Iranian opposition. "The children of government officials don't believe in the work of their fathers," says Ramin Jahanbegloo, an Iranian scholar at the University of Toronto. "She somehow represents the image of rebellious Iranian youth today." M

Jail time for Saudi 'sex braggart'

BY KATIE ENGELHART • Some people like to boast about their sexual conquests, others think it uncouth to do so. Here's a story supporting the latter group: last week, 32-year-old Mazen Abdul-Jawad was sentenced to five years in a Saudi Arabian jail and 1,000 lashes for vaunting his sexual escapades on a Lebanon-based Arabic station, LBC. The self professed philanderer, a divorced father of four, was detained in July, shortly after appearing on the show *Bold Red Line*, where he detailed his technique for picking up women at shopping malls—live on TV. He also paraded a number of sex toys in front of the camera, and reflected on losing his virginity at the age of 14.

In the West, Jawad, dubbed a "sex braggart" and the "Saudi Casanova" by the Saudi press, might have simply been written off as a lout looking for his 15 minutes of fame. Not in the kingdom, where unmarried men and women are forbidden from mingling and the Islamic religious elite reigns over many areas of public life. Jawad's TV escapade led 200 Saudis to file legal complaints against him.

Jawad's brother says there is little hope for his eventual reintegration back into society. "Now he has been fired from his job and after his jail term it won't be possible for him to get a job in government or the private sector because he was charged with a case of moral indecency." Still, Jawad's lawyer has not given up yet, insisting that the very foundation of the charges against his client is flawed. "He wasn't talking about himself [on the television show]," lawyer Sulaiman al-Jumeh explained, adding that "the real culprit" is the television station which aired the contentious material.



Abdul-Jawad will also get 1,000 lashes for touting his conquests

LBC, which is controlled by Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, has also been punished—two of its branches have been forced to suspend programming. And Jawad's actions have also landed some of his buddies in hot water: three friends who appeared on the show with him have each been given two-year jail sentences, and 300 lashes, for discussing sex publicly. M

Return of a troubling nativist



Terre'Blanche, a South African white supremacist, is back

BY RACHEL MENDLESON • One of South Africa's most notorious white supremacists has resurfaced—and he has ambitious plans. On Oct. 10, Eugene Terre'Blanche, who founded the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB) in the '70s, held a rally with 300 supporters in a hall outside of Johannesburg. His goal: to fight for an independent Afrikaner republic. Against the backdrop of the AWB's swastika-style flag, Terre'Blanche told the crowd, which reportedly included representatives from some 23 far right groups, "Our land is being run by criminals who murder and rob. This land was the best, and they ruined it all."

Terre'Blanche's return has caught many by surprise. During the '80s and '90s, he was well known for his fiery oratory and violent demonstrations against the end of apartheid. But after he was jailed for two 1996 incidents—the assault of a black gas station attendant and attempted murder of a black security guard—he fell off the political map. Since his release from prison in 2004, he had been maintaining a low profile, and is now taking a less militant approach. "There are other options we have to exercise first," he said recently. "We have a strong case to take to the United Nations."

Though he has for years quietly championed a breakaway Afrikaner state, his charge that whites have become the target of racism has gained attention in recent months. Canada inserted itself into the debate in September, when the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) accepted the refugee application of Brandon Huntley, a white South African, on the grounds that he had faced racist attacks. (The federal government is seeking leave to challenge the IRB's ruling before the Federal Court.)

But in South Africa, few are paying much heed to him or his case. According to a spokesman for the country's ruling African National Congress Party, the AWB is "singing an old song that will not work." M

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ALEX CRYDERMAN dreamed of retiring with a healthy pension. Then the mill he works at filed for bankruptcy and everything changed.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRENT LINTON

DOWNSIZED DREAMS

Retirement plans are being dashed by a new economic reality

THE RETIREMENT CRISIS
PART 1 OF A SERIES

BY JASON KIRBY • Like most young men growing up in Thunder Bay, Ont., in the 1970s, or anywhere on the planet for that matter, Alex Cryderman was too focused on the next weekend to give much thought to his golden years. So, at 21, when he followed his father and brother into a job at the Abitibi paper mill, and learned that part of his paycheque would be held back to fund his pension, he was more annoyed than anything. That feeling changed over time, of course. And as the months turned into years and the years to decades, Cryderman, now 50, came to rely heavily on his pension savings for the retirement plan taking shape in his head. "I was going to be out of here in five years with a pretty good pension," he says. "I was going to spend time on my boat, fish, travel with my wife, really live the good life like they say in the ads."

Then one morning earlier this year, Cryderman awoke to frightening news—Abitibi-Bowater had filed for bankruptcy protection. Suddenly, his pension, along with those of 8,000 other employees at the company, was at serious risk. With the stock market collapse and the company no longer paying into the pension fund, the plan has become dangerously underfunded. Now Cryderman can only wait, and regret—wait to learn how much of his retirement savings he'll be able to salvage, and regret not putting more money away on the side over the years. "If you'd have known what was coming down the pipe, you'd have lived your life differently," he says. "We never thought this day would ever come."

It's become an all too familiar refrain across the country. Employees in industries as diverse as technology, media, forestry and manufacturing are all seeing their pensions evaporate before their eyes as companies falter and creditors put them under the knife. But it's not just those workers lucky enough to have a pension who've been side-swiped. After all, more than 60 per cent of Canadians have no such safety net at all. For the unfortunate majority, market turmoil has pummelled what little savings they'd managed to tuck away. In 2007, according to a poll by RBC, the average Canadian with an RRSP had managed to save just $72,481, but since then the market has fallen a stunning 23 per cent. And for those younger workers who still have years left to save, there's the prospect of about 10 million baby boomers retiring over the next 15 years—a huge demographic shift with the potential to cripple the country's finances and drive up taxes if it's not handled smartly. "Suddenly everybody has woken up to the fact that two-thirds of retirees are going to be underfunded," says Glen Hodgson, chief economist with the Conference Board of Canada. "There's a huge danger right now that we're under saved as a nation."

Put it all together, and Canadian workers of all ages are now coming to terms with a daunting realization—unless you're lucky enough to have an ironclad, taxpayer-backed government pension, or rich relatives, your dreams of retirement are now truly out of reach. We aren't about to go back to the early 19th century when many workers toiled seven days a week until the day they died.

But the cherished notion that at some fixed date in the future workers can put down their wrenches or log off for good is coming to an end

The idea of taking time off at the end of your working life to kick back and enjoy your final years is a relatively modern invention. In 1889 German chancellor Otto von Bismarck crafted the world's first government-supported pension for workers once they hit age 70 (it later became 65). That wasn't much of a concession, though. The average life expectancy at the time in the country was just 40. "He was a brilliant general and a very clever actuary," says Moshe Milevsky, a professor of finance at York University's Schulich School of Business. "He knew few people got to that age so it wasn't expensive. Since then retirement has morphed into a very long vacation that's simply not sustainable."

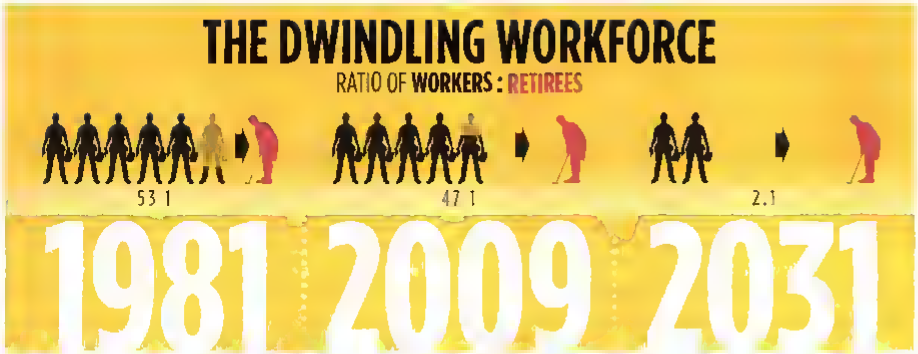
Happily, today most of us see 40 come and go with little more than a few cheesy mid-life birthday cards and maybe a new sports car. But the idea that 65 would be the point at which we punch out from work for the last time has stuck. And this is the root of many of the problems governments, companies and workers now face. In the 1950s, just a decade before the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) was created and set 65 as retirement age, life expectancy was just one year past that. Today, the average life expectancy is 80 (more for women, less for men), and some time in the coming decades, thanks to medical advances, it may well hit triple digits.

Yet rather than working longer, many of us have been choosing to leave our jobs earlier. Since 1976 the average age of retirement in Canada has fallen from nearly 65 to 61, while many workers in the public sector now leave their jobs before they even turn 60. What this means is workers are spending less time in their earning years, yet expect to spend even more time living off their depleted nest eggs. It doesn't take a math teacher to explain the flaw there, though it does help to use one to illustrate the point. The average teacher in Ontario retires at 57 yet has a life expectancy of 90, says Robert Brown, an actuarial scientist at the University of Waterloo who has dug into the data. In other words, that math teacher will potentially spend more time in retirement than working in the classroom.

For government employees with defined benefit (DB) pension plans, like teachers, garbage collectors, police officers and postal workers, this isn't a terrible concern. DB plans are by far the most luxurious form of retirement savings out there, because they guarantee retirees a fixed payout that often rises along with inflation. About 80 per cent of public sector workers enjoy DB plans, versus just 23 per cent in the private sector. But if teachers don't have to worry about their pensions, taxpayers sure do. These comfy plans are a huge public liability. Should a public sector pension fund come up short, taxpayers will be on the hook to bail out retirees.

The prospects are far worse for those in the private sector. DB plans are rare and growing rarer. Instead, those private sector workers fortunate enough to have a pension at all are mostly enrolled in defined contribution (DC) plans. In that type of plan, payouts to retirees depend entirely on how much money is put in, as well as how well it is managed. With the plunge in stock markets last year, and the recession, many DC pension plans have been devastated. But the same goes for many private sector DB plans, which face huge shortfalls. In the case of AbitibiBowater, an audit is being carried out on the pension fund, but it's expected to be underfunded by between 20 and 25 per cent. Meanwhile, retirees at Nortel, which filed for bankruptcy earlier this year, could see their pensions cut by more than 30 per cent, forcing some retirees to return to work to make ends meet. So even as workers are possibly looking at decades in retirement, their pensions are proving wholly unreliable.

Making things worse, fewer and fewer companies are offering their employees a pension plan of any type, leaving workers completely on their own when it comes to retirement saving. Over the last 20 years the financial service industry has honed its message to this ever expanding group, with a barrage of commercials every RRSP season. The message: put a little away each year, and you too can enjoy freedom at 55 to stroll windswept beaches and spend summers at the cottage with the grandkids. It all sounds nice, but there's little to suggest that coming generations will be able to realize that dreamy version of retirement.



THE RATIO of workers to retirees is expected to keep shrinking for the next 20 years, creating a huge burden for future generations

When the Dow Jones Industrial Average passed through the 10,000 mark last week, loud cheers went up, heralding it as a return to stability. But like some bad horror movie where the heroes are lost in the woods and walking in circles, we've criss-crossed through 10,000 at least a dozen times since 1999.

Is it really any wonder then that younger Canadians—those most likely to be without a pension plan—are shunning the markets? According to a survey released by TD Canada Trust last month, workers between the ages of 18 and 34 said they are saving as little as 10 per cent of their income. That's down considerably from the 29 per cent that Canadians over 55 recalled saving when they were between those ages. There's probably some historical revisionism on the part of older Canadians in the survey, but it fits with many other studies conducted in recent years. That will only exacerbate the problem as those younger workers approach a retirement that could stretch into four decades. "Gen-Yers face the worst of it, but I don't think they're aware of it at all," says Milevsky.

But there's an even bigger problem looming in the future. Just as Canadians are living longer, there are fewer of us being born. Canada's fertility rate of 1.66 children per woman, while up slightly in recent years, is still near record lows and creating serious unbalance. The declining ratio of workers to retirees threatens to create a huge burden on future generations. Today there are about five workers for every retiree over the age of 65, but by 2031 there will be just two people working for every one in retirement, according to Statistics Canada. "The ratio of workers to retirees is dropping and it will continue to fall for another 20 years before it levels out," says Malcolm Hamilton, an actuary with human resources firm Mercer. "Nobody is really sure what the implications are, other than they could be profound."


REBECCA COOK/REUTERS

THERE'S NO GETTING AROUND THE FACT THAT THE 30-YEAR RETIREMENT IS UNSUSTAINABLE

One very real possibility is that health care and Old Age Security costs are likely to surge, forcing governments to hike taxes on the shrinking workforce. There's no real threat of the country going bust, says Jonathan Kesselman, a public policy professor at Simon Fraser University, but it will become a huge political issue. "How much will the working population in the year 2030 be willing to see their taxes go to support old folks, versus supporting the things they want, like better highways, schools and health care for themselves?"

If you want to see where we could be headed in all of this, look across the pond to Europe. Last week, a report submitted to the European Union warned that the mass of retiring workers is a time bomb waiting to go off, and could do far more damage to countries' finances than the recent bouts of deficit spending. "Though the debt and deficit increases are by themselves quite impressive, the projected impact on public finances of aging populations is anticipated to dwarf the effect of the crisis many times over," the report stated. The only real answer, the EU was told, is for workers to curb their retirement expectations and stay on the job longer.

In some ways, Canada is better off than many other countries. Reforms in the 1990s closed the funding gap for the CPP, and this country's relatively low debt as a share of GDP should leave more fiscal room to manoeuvre if the demographic crunch becomes serious. Last week, a report by Mercer ranked Canada's public and private pension system fourth out of 11 countries. And there are other things that can still be done to try to repair the retirement system. Unions would like to see CPP payouts expanded. They have also called on government to protect workers' pensions in the event of corporate bankruptcies. This December provincial finance ministers will meet in the Yukon to discuss the pension crisis.

But whatever solutions they propose, many experts say there's no getting around the fact the 30-year retirement has become unsustainable. We've already seen governments in Canada take some steps to keep workers in the labour force longer. Provinces like B.C. and Ontario have abolished mandatory retirement legislation. Earlier this year Ottawa proposed changes to the CPP, set to take effect in 2011, that reward workers who stick around until they're 70. More is needed, according to a study released by the C.D. Howe Institute in July. In addition to encouraging Canadians to have more babies, and hence more workers, the report said Canada has little choice but to push back the age of retirement. "Advances in longevity and shifts toward later workforce entry and less physically demanding occupations mean that the equivalent of working until age 65 in 1970 is now working until at least age 70," the report said. At the very least, says the University of Waterloo's Brown, workers should be encouraged to give up the idea of early retirement and stay on the job until 65.

So perhaps it's a good sign that more workers plan to keep working in some fashion after they retire. Last year, in another RRSP season survey, RBC Financial found that more than half of workers under the age of 55 plan to work as long as possible, even if they have the money needed to retire.

Besides, maybe working longer isn't such a bad idea after all. Just last week researchers at the University of Maryland found that retirees who take on temporary or part-time jobs related to their fields suffer from fewer diseases and mental health problems than those who opt for full-time retirement. For workers like Cryderman, who toil in mills, mines and factories, that's not an option. But it's a message other workers might pay attention to. After all, they probably won't have a choice anyway. M

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HIGH-PRICED STUNT

How much did the Balloon Boy drama cost the economy?

BY JASON KIRBY • Where were you when the empty balloon floated over Colorado? Last week's drama-turned-alleged-hoax was no presidential assassination or shuttle disaster. But the cliched question is still getting asked a lot lately. Where were you when Michael Jackson died, or during his funeral, or when the jet plane miraculously landed on New York's Hudson River? Nowadays, the answer is often the same: at the office, watching it happen instead of doing any work.



IT'S SAFE to assume that as many as 10 million workers ignored their jobs for Balloon Boy

Even before last week's story about the boy in a runaway balloon was exposed as a possible scam, a question emerged. What happens to the economy when millions of workers simultaneously ignore their jobs and gather around the TV, surf for gossip about the weird family behind the stunt, or Twitter each twist and turn of the story? "The amount of work hours that are wasted by people playing around on computers is already mind-bogglingly astronomical," says Robert Thompson, a professor of media studies at Syracuse University in New York. "When something like Balloon Boy or Michael Jackson's death comes along, workers all waste their time on the same thing." That collective procrastination can easily add up to vast sums at a time when the recession is already hammering companies.

How many people followed the balloon story? Hard to say. Major cable networks like CNN, Fox and MSNBC attracted a combined 4.8 million viewers during the saga. Each minute, 1,000 new messages were posted on Twitter. Meanwhile, KUSA, the Denver TV station that tracked the balloon with its helicopter, saw the number of visitors to its site jump tenfold, to nearly one million. Given the fact that 65 million Americans go online at work every day, according to research firm eMarketer, it's not stretching things to assume between five million and 10 million workers ignored their jobs for Balloon Boy. Maybe they weren't glued to their screens the whole time, but it adds up. "The Internet allows us to follow a story as it progresses though the day, so it wasn't just a one-time thing, it's an entire-day thing," says Shaun Williams, who works in a New York advertising firm and whose co-workers huddled together to watch the drama unfold over the Internet.

One way to value the hit to the North American economy is to peg a dollar figure to each hour of lost work, says Daniel Trefler at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. Conveniently, the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity conducted a study in 2006 that found the average worker in Ontario puts in 128 fewer hours than his peers in the U.S., reducing per capita prosperity in the province by $29 for every hour he works less. In other words, if everyone in the province stopped working for an hour, it would hit the Ontario economy to the tune of $330 million. Another more basic approach is to work backwards from America's US$14 trillion GDP, says Peter Cohan, an instructor at Babson College near Boston, who teaches economic competitiveness. Based on the number of people employed and the average workweek, an hour of shirking then costs about US$6 per employee.

That might not sound like much, but if the Internet has taught us anything, besides how to waste time, it's that millions of tiny actions can aggregate into a major force. If just five million people spent two hours following the balloon, it could have easily sapped between $60 million and $300 million, depending on the measurement. Duplicate that for time spent watching passengers escape from Flight 1549 as it floated on the Hudson. And way more than five million people wasted several hours the day Michael Jackson died, easily costing the economy in excess of $1 billion. If those figures sound far out, consider the following. Five years ago *Salary.com*, a company that provides HR management tools, estimated workers waste 2.09 hours a day, costing employers US$759 billion a year in salaries for work that never gets done.

Don't expect workers to change their wasteful ways any time soon. Unlike two decades ago when Baby Jessica fell into a well and upstart CNN made the bold move of following her three-day ordeal around the clock, today wall-to-wall coverage is a given on even mundane stories. So is the expectation we'll each know all the details. "Twenty years ago, when we were much less connected, people weren't embarrassed if they hadn't heard about a particular story," says Trefler. "Now if you don't keep up to date, there's something odd about you." But something more basic is going on, says Thompson. Work has moved from the factory floor to the office, and the temptations are vast. "It would be as if in the old days the drill press you worked on also had dancing girls," he says. It's a wonder we get anything done at all. M

EMPLOYEE OF THE WEEK

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE...

After a series of fires at a Pilot truck stop near Dallas, employee Thomas Allen Carr, 25, came under scrutiny. "We looked at his time card, and all the fires had occurred on the nights he was working," explained a fire-rescue captain. Carr later confessed to setting fire to his workplace a whopping 10 times. His motive? "He wanted to be a hero by discovering the fire, putting the fire out and knocking on doors to rescue people," the investigator said.

PHOTOGRAPHY — SUE LYAN

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ECONOWATCH

A WEEKLY SCORECARD ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY IN NORTH AMERICA AND BEYOND



JASON KIRBY

As tongue lashings go, it was rather sedate. When the Bank of Canada left its overnight interest rate at 0.25 per cent on Tuesday, it took the opportunity to send a message to currency markets. If the loonie continues to approach parity with the American greenback, it will "more than fully offset" the recent signs of recovery.

Those would hardly be fighting words—normally. Except this isn't the normal world. It's the rarefied realm of central banking, where economists hang on every intonation for hints of future policy changes. In that context, the warning came like a blow to the solar plexus. It worked, too, for now. After climbing nearly 18 per cent this year, the Canadian dollar fell two cents immediately following the central bank's statement, to US95.3 cents.

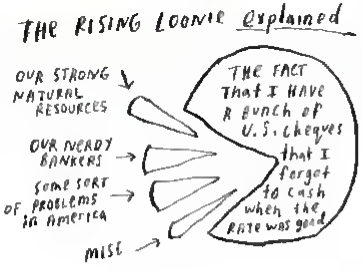
Whether it will stay down is another matter. Some smart investors don't think so. Last week Dennis Gartman, editor of the influential *Gartman Letter*, was in Toronto and told a gathering of financial analysts that "the [loonie] will move way past parity." This from a man who, 20 years ago this month, laid out his "ridiculously simple rules" for trading, with number two being "buy high and sell higher." So how much higher could the Canadian dollar go? At least another 14 per cent more than it has already, he said.

There's a lot of evidence to suggest he'll be proven right. For one thing, commodity prices are far below where they were in September 2007, when the dollar last hit parity. But as the economy recovers, they'll rise. As they do, it will add even more strength to the loonie. Hence the Bank of Canada's fears that the dollar will crush Canadian companies that rely on exports for their survival.

But another thing has changed, and it offers hope that companies are coming to terms with the strengthened dollar. Earlier this month, the Bank of Canada released its autumn business outlook survey. When businesses were asked if sales are expected to grow over the next year, they were the most optimistic they've been in a decade. Nearly 70 per cent said yes. In 2007, with the dollar soaring, the mood was far grimmer. Fewer than half that many saw any upside, and most expected their businesses to flatline or decline.

Does that mean Canadian companies have made the painful adjustment to life with a strong loonie? Not entirely. But they've started the process. More importantly, the shock from the initial body blow of a high dollar seems to be wearing off. M

OVERDRAWN by Jason Logan



THE GOOD NEWS

Housing on fire

What was that about a housing correction? In the third quarter, Canadian house prices jumped 11 per cent over the same time last year, as buyers snapped up 135,182 existing homes. In September alone, the number of sales jumped 17 per cent from a year ago, to 42,958, according to the Canadian Real Estate Association.



Sunny forecast

The Canadian economy is forecast to grow 2.9 per cent next year, and as much as 3.6 per cent in 2011, the Conference Board of Canada predicts. There is one catch. The gains are largely the result of massive government stimulus programs.

Fewer claims

The U.S. Labor Department fêted some rare but welcome news on the employment front. The number of newly laid-off workers filing for unemployment insurance has fallen to the lowest level since January. First-time claims fell to a seasonally adjusted 514,000, below what economists had expected.

Hogtown boom

Commercial real estate is making a comeback in Toronto after nearly two years of disappointing sales. Investment in properties in Canada's largest city jumped 46 per cent in the third quarter compared to the previous quarter.

THE BAD NEWS

Driving down sales

We knew it was coming but that doesn't make it any easier. With America's cash for clunkers program finished, the hangover is setting in. In September, automobile sales plunged 10.4 per cent. That in turn dragged U.S. retail sales down 1.5 per cent, the worst decline since retail sales fell 3.2 per cent last December. We're feeling the effect in Canada, too. Factory sales dropped 2.1 per cent in August, due largely to declining automobile shipments.



Out of house

Someone forgot to tell the banks things are improving in the U.S. housing market. A record number of homeowners were forced into foreclosure in the third quarter. More than 930,000 homes received a default notice or were repossessed, a jump of 23 per cent from the year before, according to research firm RealtyTrac. One out of every 136 U.S. homes received a foreclosure filing during the quarter.

Red cards

Major U.S. credit card companies reported a larger than expected increase in late payments in September. The data suggests Americans are still struggling with job losses and that the number of bad loans may increase in the coming months. Bank of America wrote off 14.5 per cent of its card loans, the highest rate among credit card issuers.

GRAPH OF THE WEEK

A BEAR MARKET RALLY • It's no surprise investors are cheering recent market gains. This is the sharpest rally ever seen in the midst of a recession. But some observers wonder if it's too good to be true given the still-fragile state of the economy. Is this another bubble?



SOURCE: G. LIAN/SHEFF HAJER

SIGNS OF THE TIMES





GETTY

▶ Hoteliers in Hawaii are facing a double whammy as occupancy rates slump to a 15 year low just as the number of new or renovated rooms is on the rise. Investors sank boatloads of cash into Hawaiian resorts during the last real estate boom, but hotels are no longer generating enough cash to pay for the loans. The numbers of visitors to the state has fallen over 10 per cent in the past two years. It's all left the hotel industry teetering on the brink.

▶ The 427-year-old Tour d'Argent restaurant in Paris is cleaning out its 450,000-bottle wine cellar, considered one of the best in the world, and is putting 18,000 bottles up for auction. Among the treasures: a 1788 cognac that's expected to go for as much as US$4,500. The sale is expected to raise US$1.5 million as demand for rare and pricey bottles comes roaring back after falling off dramatically last year.

LATEST INTELLIGENCE

Canada's economic recovery is under threat by the soaring loonie which continues to hover around US95 cents. Driven in part by the weak U.S. greenback, the surging Canadian dollar is putting exporters at a competitive disadvantage just as demand for their products sputters back to life.

"The latest surge is indeed likely to put a heavy dampener on Canada's fledgling economic recovery."—*Douglas Porter, deputy chief economist, BMO Capital Markets*

"The message to manufacturers in Ontario is they're going to have to position themselves to live with this."—*Avery Shenfeld, chief economist, CIBC World Markets*

"The last thing the Bank of Canada is going to want is a stronger Canadian dollar."



—*Craig Alexander, deputy chief economist, TD Bank*

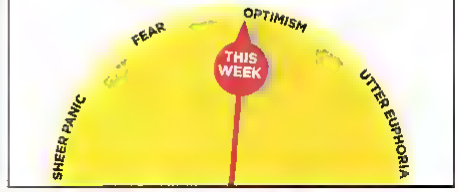
"The Canadian dollar will trend well past par to the U.S. dollar. It has no choice ... because of the inherent strength of the Canadian economy."—*Dennis Gartman, economist and editor, the Gartman Letter*

"An orderly decline in the U.S. dollar is necessary to a sustained rebalancing of the global economy."—*Sherry Cooper, chief economist, BMO Capital Markets*

"There is now an increased focus on parity. We can get there very quickly."—*Camilla Sutton, currency strategist, Scotia Capital*

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THEY'RE DRINKING WHAT?

Kids seeking a quick high are downing hand sanitizer

BY ALEXANDRA SHIMO • The best way to drink hand sanitizer is straight, like whisky, and down it "like a shot," explains Tyler, a Grade 10 student who lives in Toronto Undiluted, the alcohol-based liquid tastes a little like "vodka and bug spray," he adds

The alarming comment from the 15-year-old mirrors a growing number of news reports about teenagers and children drinking the antiseptic hand-cleaning products Most hand sanitizers have an alcoholic content between 60 and 90 per cent, which means that even small amounts have led to a number of cases of alcohol poisoning in younger children That percentage is much higher than even that of most hard liquors, giving it an appeal to kids looking for a quick high, explains Jane Wells, a drama teacher at Toronto's after school Care Program Wells has come to know a lot about this subject. she discovered that a group of eight and nine-year olds drank hand sanitizer at school just before she took them on a school walk When she noticed them acting strange and giggling, they first told her they had been drinking alcohol, but after some probing, confessed it was really the hand cleaner They told her they'd been enticed by the promise of alcohol "right on the bottle," she says

This kind of situation creates a problem for schools The liquid, jokingly called "booze ooze" on parenting blogs, is one of the best defences against H1N1 and other colds and flus, says Jonathan Kerr, a Belleville, Ont based family doctor and member of the board of directors for the Ontario College of Family Physicians But with reports of children drinking it or setting it alight (it's flammable), Kerr says, schools face an "interesting dilemma."

A number of Canadian schools have banned alcohol-based hand sanitizer from the premises In some schools in Cape Breton, it isn't allowed in the classroom, and provided to children only when there isn't soap and water Parents are discouraged from giving bottles to kids, although it's not confiscated unless it "causes problems" at school, explains Ambrose White, director of operational services for the Cape Breton Victoria school board Lee County schools in Florida initially banned the substance, but then relented last month because of the threat of swine flu Winnipeg schools won't use the alcohol-based kind for safety reasons, but have introduced non-alcohol-based sanitizers, which are about as effective, according to studies, but can be more expensive

Ossington/Old Orchard Junior Public School in Toronto allows kids to use it in the classroom, but the bottles are kept under close scrutiny on the teacher's desk or within eyesight "Teachers have control over it," says someone who works at the school but did not want their name used Kids are allowed to use it, but they are watched "as they squirt so they don't lick it"



CHILDREN at a Montassori school in Ancaster, Ont., are given hand sanitizer

The preference among kids who have tried it, according to an informal poll done by *Maclean's*, is to drink hand sanitizer straight It dries out the throat, and tastes bitter and foul-- in short, nothing like the fruity flavours it promises, such as warm vanilla sugar, Japanese cherry blossom, coconut lime verbena, cucumber melon, midnight pomegranate and nectarine mint. These not only sound enticing, they come in "pretty bottles" that are seductive to young children, explains Christine Crosby, a grandmother who publishes *Grand*, an online magazine about grandparenting Crosby, who has two grandchildren aged five and eight, is hyper-vigilant around the product—she's heard of children being rushed to hospital with alcohol poisoning after taking a swig. "It's everywhere at the moment," she says, "and it can be scary"

Eighteen-year old Kyle, who did not want his last name used, lives in Barrie, Ont He drank strawberry flavoured hand sanitizer on a dare at a party, but he draws the line at sniffing, because it would "burn your nose right out" That's not to say it isn't done online footage of kids sniffing hand sanitizer makes it look painful But it might be more common than its enjoyment factor would suggest a Texas teen was accused of sniffing the hand sanitizer to "induce a condition of intoxication, hallucination and elation," according to a Denton County court petition. The charges were dropped because hand sanitizer is not an abusive inhalant under the Texas Health and Safety Code His father, Richard Ortiz, claimed his son sniffed only because he liked the smell

Having had one scare already, Wells is extra careful and vigilant with it now around her students "It's worrying," she says "You are loath to say 'Don't drink that!' because they might not have thought of it until you said it" M



MALAYSIA FREE HONEYMOON TO SAVE MARRIAGE

There's nothing like sunshine and palm trees to repair a troubled marriage. At least that's what the government in Malaysia's eastern state of Terengganu is banking on. In a bid to cut down on divorces, the conservative Muslim state is offering free, three-day second honeymoons on a tropical island off the coast of Terengganu to couples on the verge of calling it quits. For successful applicants, the vacations, worth up to $450, include counselling.

KEVAN D. ASHWORTH/CP

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Pierre & Maggie: the untold story

New revelations about the most fascinating marriage in Canadian history

BY JOHN GEDDES • There's something dark, almost to the point of the occult, in the way Pierre Trudeau is often remembered. Scan across the shelf of books about him: titles refer to his "shadow," the notion he remains "hidden," and one even calls him a "magus." The most famous biographical quote about him claims "he haunts us still."

Perhaps it's all this gloom that makes the story of his courtship and marriage such welcome leavening in the tale. The dancing entrance of Margaret Sinclair, quintessential flower child, brings to the story a tie-dyed splash of contrast, occasionally sheer silliness—not to mention doomed romance, rare beauty and rock-star celebrity. No wage and price controls or constitutional amendments in this chapter.

Yet the famous Maggie and Pierre saga is more than a mere diversion from the main current of the Trudeau narrative. This exclusive excerpt from *Just Watch Me: The Life of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, 1968-2000*, the second volume of John English's authoritative biography of Canada's 15th prime minister, fits their love story into tumultuous political times. The University of Waterloo history professor had exclusive access to Trudeau's papers, and interviewed his family members and friends, some of whose privacy he protects by quoting them anonymously.

He shows Trudeau's private and public sides intersecting poignantly when he is drawn closer to Margaret by their being together on the night Pierre Laporte, the Quebec labour minister, is murdered by his FLQ kidnappers. Yet it would be a mistake to try to integrate Margaret too tightly into Trudeau's political life. He certainly didn't.

In fact, English says if he had to pick one aspect of Trudeau's character that struck him repeatedly in his research, it was the way he kept the different parts of his life from intermingling. "I was surprised how compartmentalized he was. It allowed him to be a very disciplined person as prime minister," English said. "People who were very close to him on something fundamental were totally closed off from other parts of his life."

For instance, Jim Coutts, enormously influential as Trudeau's principal secretary from 1975 to 1981, never considered himself a friend of his boss. Marc Lalonde, who also served as principal secretary and then emerged as a powerful cabinet minister, was never invited to Trudeau's house for dinner. But then, they were men. "Trudeau seemed to pour his heart out with women,' English says. "With men, he always had his elbows up."

Just Watch Me reveals how Trudeau's private circle saw his public persona. In early 1969, he erupted several times in short order, railing against the media at a news conference, storming out of a meeting, and swearing at a protester. The public saw a mercurial leader. An old flame from the 1940s, Thérèse Gouin Décarie, saw an unhappy friend. "Pierre, our Pierre," she wrote in a note English found in his papers, "what has happened to you?"

He was famously disciplined about everything, from keeping fit to exercising his mind. If he behaved erratically, Trudeau instantly regretted it. But he was consistently attracted to women who were impulsive. He liked the excitement of dating outspoken celebrities like Barbra Streisand and Margot Kidder. More involved was his relationship with Carroll Guerin, whom he'd first dated in the late 1950s. She's described by English as "strikingly beautiful, Catholic, liberal, fluently trilingual, independently wealthy, and knowledgeable about the arts," and, perhaps most importantly, "not in awe of Trudeau." Remarkably, Trudeau consulted Guerin, to whom he had repeatedly proposed, about marrying Margaret.



CELEBRATING the RCMP's centennial at the Government House in 1973

PETER BREGG/CP

In hindsight, the pairing of the 52-year-old prime minister with a 22-year-old hippie looks bound to fail from the start. To his detractors, the folly fits with their view of Trudeau as a less than serious figure. Indeed, by the time he took his walk in the snow in 1984, it was easy enough to see him—except on the Constitution and national unity—as increasingly irrelevant. After all, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan had ushered in a new faith in free markets and deregulation. But English finds Trudeau throwing himself into a 1981 bid to persuade the rich North that its economic priority should be doing much more to help the poor South. His skepticism about the anti-government-intervention vogue in economics looked retrograde.

Until lately, English says last year's market meltdown, and the resulting rediscovery of the benefits of regulation, cast a new light on Trudeau's resistance of the Thatcher-Reagan revolution. "Now he seems more prescient," English says, "and some of his reservations seem to have been accurate."

Trudeau tried to seal off politics from the realm of the personal. Of course, that was as impossible then as it is today. So if his economic instincts are looking plausible again in 2009, perhaps his romantic foibles are also due for a sympathetic reappraisal—not a dilettante's foolishness, but a prime example of an intensely self-aware man's quest for fulfilment in every compartment of his complex life. M

EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT

As the bachelor Trudeau neared mid-century, he began to date with the energy of a sixties teenager, and as Kissinger aptly said, 'power is the greatest aphrodisiac.' Although some of his interests—classical music, philosophy, and political theory—were not those of most young people, he possessed a youthful flair, a romantic attachment to the wilderness, a chiselled body, a sharp wit, and, of course, power.

In the later sixties his mood shifted, and he spoke surprisingly freely about wanting to abandon his bachelorhood. Perhaps it was the commitment to pursuing the leadership that had prompted such thoughts. His hope for a family was certainly an issue that had weighed on him when he'd embarked on the leadership quest and even caused him to con-

sider turning down the historic opportunity Later, after he became prime minister, reporters quizzed Trudeau at the Ottawa airport about rumours that he had been married during his trip to the North in July 1968. He denied the suppositions but then replied, surprisingly, "I'm constantly thinking of marriage." To a CBC reporter in a 1968 year end interview, he responded that instead of making a resolution to remain a bachelor, he was "rather despondent that leap year should have passed by without my really having had time to make the kind of deal I would have liked. But, never mind," he said. "This year I'll be taking initiatives!" And he did.

Margaret Sinclair remained very much in his mind and was often by his side after Trudeau wooed her following their encounter at the leadership convention. By Christmas 1969, Trudeau and Margaret "were confessing to each other that [they] were unmistakably in love." Certainly, there were doubts. he was too old and she too young and different. They saw each other secretly in the fall of 1969 and spent weekends at Harrington Lake, where they rumpled the beds in the other rooms to deceive the staff into believing that others had been there. There were only two public occasions in 1970, once at the National Gallery, when Margaret dressed for a costume ball as a "hippie" Juliet, and once at a dinner party at the home of Wendy and Tim Porteous. At the gallery, groups froze when they came near, and Margaret, surprised by the coolness of her welcome, sobbed uncontrollably after they left. At the Porteous home, everyone spoke French, which Margaret did not understand. For a brief time in the winter of 1970 the two broke up. Margaret began dating a divinity student, and Trudeau and Streisand had their fling.

But then, at Easter, shortly after Pierre and Barbra had gone their separate ways, Pierre and Jean Marchand spent a ski holiday at Whistler, and Margaret met up with Trudeau there. Romance blossomed again, and Margaret decided to enrol at the University of Ottawa for the fall term in the department of psychology. As she warmed to Pierre, he, not surprisingly, pulled back, telling her she was "too young and too romantic." They broke up once more and Margaret returned to British Columbia, but then he called during a visit to Vancouver in early summer 1970 and asked her to go scuba diving with him in the Caribbean. "What for?" she fumed. "More pain? I can't go on playing this sort of life." He begged for patience and asked her to fly back to Ottawa with him.

She then spent a weekend with him at Harrington Lake, and one summer after noon beside the shimmering water, Trudeau, entranced, murmured that they should talk about marriage. It was not a proposal, he said later, but Margaret thought it was. As one of Trudeau's closest friends remarked, Pierre was playing dangerously. In those times Margaret jumped to her feet, flung her arms around him, and exclaimed, "When? Tomorrow?" A startled Trudeau replied, "Let's take it easy," but Margaret jumped into the lake and swam around in circles "like a frenzied dolphin." When she finally emerged from the water, Pierre set out some conditions she should be "a good faithful wife to him, give up drugs, and stop being so flighty." He warned her that he was 50 years old and "extremely solitary by nature." Trudeau was troubled. Had he gone too far? As Margaret wrote later, "This period was the closest I ever came to seeing Pierre out of full control in all our time together." While becoming "most attentive and loving," he believed, in Margaret's words, "that he must convince himself that it would work."

Trudeau decided to take a break in the month of August, in the Caribbean with Margaret and the noted ocean scientist Dr. Joe MacInnis and his wife, Debby. He then vacationed alone that summer at the Aga Khan's home in Sardinia and on a yacht in the Mediterranean. He also decided to speak with his long

TRUDEAU AND GUÉRIN in 1959 (top), in China with Margaret in 1973 (left)| with Streisand at the NAC in 1970 (right)







Trudeau wanted to talk about marriage. It was not a proposal, he said later. Margaret thought it was.

TRUDEAU ARCHIVES; PETER BREGG/CP; CP

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time friend Carroll Guérin. Carroll had spent much of her time in Europe and England in recent years and had been on a spiritual quest, including a period in a monastery. For these reasons, she had seen Trudeau only intermittently since he had entered politics, although she remained emotionally committed and dated no others until the late sixties.

Strikingly beautiful, Catholic, liberal, fluently trilingual, independently wealthy, and knowledgeable about the arts, Carroll was not in awe of Trudeau, and their relationship was full of respect and playfulness. Over the years, he had raised the question of marriage, to the point where he began one conversation with the disclaimer: "Don't worry, I'm not going to ask you to marry me today." Now he told her he was seriously contemplating marriage (to Margaret Sinclair), and referring to their discussions of the past brought the topic up one last time, but Carroll quickly



Margaret found a pile of photos of women in his desk. 'Are you ranking us?' she asked. 'Maybe,' he said.



MARGARET at New York's Studio 54 (top), right after their wedding in March 1971

turned it away. "No," she replied. She did not think Trudeau could share the spiritual life she was devoted to and told him that, because they "could not meet at that level of togetherness which would come from Grace, 'marriage was not a good idea. She also knew that he wanted children, and her health might make that difficult. She has a letter thanking her for her thoughtfulness and for considering his proposal.

Trudeau then flew to Nassau with Margaret, Joe and Debby MacInnis, and other friends and booked in at the Small Hope Bay Lodge on the little island of Andros in the Bahamas. Trudeau's aides warned MacInnis that scuba diving was "a hobby, not a passion" for the prime minister. The aides seem to have completely misunderstood their boss's nature. He was never a man of 'hobbies'" in anything that he undertook. MacInnis would eventually take Trudeau on dives of remarkable depth, including one of 250 feet. He later said that Trudeau was always "curious about the natural world and his place in it."

But at the time there were other passions to satisfy. Margaret and Pierre "lived in a derelict shack on the beach and dived all day, spending romantic and exhausted evenings pacing the sand" as Pierre asked endless questions about her past. He claimed he needed to know everything, to prevent blackmail, and he kept saying, "I know you'll leave me one day." She said she would never leave him, but they agreed to test their love by a separation: Margaret would return to Vancouver, not Ottawa. When they were ready, they would marry, but in the meantime, they would tell no one. Margaret did tell her mother, who initially opposed the match, and then they began to plan for the wedding. Jimmy Sinclair was kept in the dark until late, as were Margaret's friends. Margaret began to take instruction for conversion to the Roman Catholic Church and, after some debate, she agreed to give up marijuana. She also began French lessons at the Alliance Française in Vancouver.

She describes Father Schwinkles, the priest who guided her conversion, as a shy man with little imagination. He presented her with a manual called *What It Is to Become a Good Catholic*, with the relevant parts underlined in black. When Margaret professed concern that the book suggested that only Catholics went to Heaven and asked what would happen to her Protestant friends, he reassured her that Catholicism represented the "jet plane to Heaven." Protestants, presumably, were condemned to turboprops. A disturbed Pierre, who called nightly, gave her a more academic reading list, which included Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* and St. Augustine's *Confessions*, to complement her mandated reading. It was a practice he continued after they married, as he tried to ensure that Margaret appreciated the intellectual foundations of her new faith.

In November 1970 Trudeau was scheduled to meet Streisand again in New York, but if he did the press learned nothing of it and, presumably, neither did Margaret. She recalls, however, coming upon a pile of photographs of various women in Trudeau's desk drawer, with Streisand's picture on top. "Are you ranking us?" she asked. "Maybe," he replied wryly. By Christmas 1970, however, Streisand had begun an affair with Hollywood star Ryan O'Neal, then at the height of his popularity for his performance in the saccharine *Love Story*. Margaret, as we know, had been with Trudeau the night Pierre Laporte was killed (it was Thanksgiving), and the experience had brought them closer together. The security was a shock, and the lovers, accustomed to secrecy but not heavy security, misbehaved by trekking into the forest one rainy day at Harrington Lake to escape watchful eyes. They got lost, the security forces panicked, and when the pair finally emerged in a clearing, they heard gunshots. There, in the middle of the lake, was an "absolutely bald policeman" holding an umbrella in one hand and shooting a rifle in the air with the other to guide them home. Margaret later wrote that the security bothered her greatly, but she did not heed her doubts about her upcoming marriage to the prime minister. In her dream, she would "turn his cold, lonely life into a warm, happy one."

Margaret returned to Vancouver in November and began to sew her wedding dress, modelled on a sari Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru had given her mother in 1954. With their decision to marry now firm, Margaret's parents agreed to let her spend Christmas with Pierre. He wanted her to meet his family, and understandably, she dreaded the experience. They quickly selected some presents from the gifts that Trudeau had received in his capacity as prime minister and drove from Ottawa to Montreal. Pierre's brother and sister, Charles and Suzette, were warm and charming and, according to Margaret, knew immediately that the relationship was serious because Trudeau had not brought other girlfriends home for Christmas. His mother, Grace, who was suffering from advanced Parkinson's disease, could only clasp Margaret's hand silently as her future daughter-in-law sat beside her bed. In Margaret's eyes, the past overwhelmed the Trudeau house, in which "not a corner had been altered since Pierre, as a little boy, had fled in terror from a surrealist painting of a skeleton holding a skull."

Back in Vancouver, as the marriage, set for March 4, 1971, neared, the wedding dress took shape in the Sinclair house and the cake was baked. Pierre called every night in an increasingly concerned state, asking, "Are you sure you want to go ahead with this?" Margaret no longer had doubts. She still had hippie friends and had had a narrow escape when she joined three of them on a trip to the United States a few weeks before the wedding. They were stopped at the border and ordered out of the car, whereupon the police seized a box containing ashes from India, mistaking it for contraband drugs. A matron subjected Margaret to a total body search while a portrait of Richard Nixon "leered" at her. Fortunately, the incident attracted no attention. Trudeau's friends noticed that he was intense and frustrated, especially in the Commons in February, when he mouthed the infamous "fuddle duddle." A week before the wedding, Margaret went to her shy priest Father Schwinkles, told him she was ready for conversion, and confessed quite a few sins, including the fact that she'd lied about the identity of the man she was dating. It was not "Pierre Mercier" but Pierre Trudeau. The priest gasped, then hurriedly commanded: "Go down on your knees and say the Lord's Prayer. Do three Hail Marys for your sins."

As the day for the wedding approached, Pierre became ever more "nervous and jittery." But he kept the news from everyone else, including those with whom he worked most closely. A snowstorm closed the Ottawa airport the morning of Thursday, March 4, but when the skies opened briefly, Trudeau

MARGARET and Pierre took in the sights of Saint-Pierre in '71



Pierre's conditions: Maggie should be a 'good faithful wife to him, give up drugs and stop being so flighty'

rushed off to fly to Vancouver. Marc Lalonde accompanied him in his limo, and engulfed in files, they worked all the way through the drive. At the airport, Lalonde asked Trudeau, "What are you doing for the weekend?" "I'm getting married," Trudeau replied without hesitation and sprinted to the plane.

The wedding day was cool and clear in Vancouver, but the atmosphere in the Sinclair home was feverish. The best-laid plans for a secret ceremony were going awry. Margaret's hairdresser had influenza, and his replacement had styled her hair to look like a "fuzzy poodle." The cake Margaret and her mother had baked so carefully was noticed plainly as Margaret had instructed but decorated with little figures of bride and groom, surrounded by bees and doves. Margaret ripped them off, knowing how offensive they would be to Pierre. Finally, Pierre arrived a half hour late at the small church where he would wed. It was bedecked with garlands of spring flowers and sprigs of wheat as a late afternoon sun lit the interior. Father Schwinkles had agreed to preside—rather reluctantly, according to Margaret, Pierre's brother Charles was best man, and Margaret's sister Lin Sinclair, the maid of honour. Trudeau's assistant Gordon Gibson, who had been fooled to the last minute, was drawn in to make the wedding party an even 14.

Margaret's wedding dress was white, hooded, and exquisite in its simple elegance, and the ceremony proceeded flawlessly.

Trudeau once again stunned Canadians with this unexpected move, and there were neither crowds nor reporters until the family reached the Sinclair home after 9:30 that evening. The newlyweds lingered long at the reception there, then changed into informal clothes for the drive away to their honeymoon in the Sinclairs' mountain log cabin.

At 6:30 the next morning, the telephone rang. A startled Trudeau leapt from the wedding bed and answered. It was Richard Nixon, thinking the newlyweds were in Ottawa and calling to offer congratulations from Pat and the American people. Other unexpected good wishes appeared on Canadian editorial pages, ranging from the chauvinist greetings in the *Vancouver Sun*, which congratulated Trudeau for his good sense in choosing a British Columbia beauty, to *Le Devoir*'s whimsical account of how the provinces had all competed with their own candidates. The gorgeous wedding photos that dominated the media on March 5 were followed by breathless stories of Margaret's athleticism, recounting how the happy couple had put in four hours of skiing. But of all the well-wishers, John Diefenbaker captured the most headlines with his brief comment: the prime minister, he sonorously declaimed, had had two choices—to marry her or adopt her. Trudeau, who liked Diefenbaker despite many angry exchanges, took the remark in good humour. M

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STAR TREK AND EDEN

An academic looks at how Adam and Eve appear in pop culture

BY BRIAN BETHUNE • You don't have to be Christian or Jewish to know the story of Adam and Eve; in fact, you can hardly have escaped it if you lived within reach of Western media over the past 2,000 years. Everyone has a store of expressions alluding to the first humans (whether actual or mythic), from fig leaves to forbidden fruit. We know what that fruit was—an apple—and what it signified: choice, knowledge, sexual temptation. And we all know that Adam and Eve lived in immortal innocence in a paradise called the Garden of Eden. Until, that is, they were tempted by a snake (Satan's mouthpiece) and "fell," out of grace and into human life as it's been ever since—nasty, brutish and short.

We are far less aware that most of the above is unsupported by the brief Biblical narrative (Genesis 2.4 to 4.1), and some of it isn't there at all. But it hardly matters, as Theresa Sanders notes in *Approaching Eden: Adam and Eve in Popular Culture*. The story of Adam and Eve—including its centuries of embellishments—is embedded in our deepest cultural DNA. For Sanders, a theologian at Washington's Georgetown University, "It's as if the story holds the same allure that the forbidden fruit held for the first couple."

Whatever *that* was. Genesis doesn't say. Early Jewish sources postulated everything from figs to pomegranates. But once the Bible was translated into Latin, a language in which the word for "apple" and "evil" (*malum*) is the same, the die was cast. Similarly, the fate of the serpent, who must have had legs as the story opens, for his punishment is to lose them. "Upon your belly shalt thou go." Medieval artists often drew a salamander-like creature, moderns, less attuned to the text, tend to portray a snake from beginning to end.

What really interests Sanders is not the story's trappings, but what popular culture has viewed as its essential message. Religious traditions may have held, in the main, to the belief that the expulsion from the garden was humanity's greatest calamity, but most pop culture is suspicious of purported Edens. An episode from the first *Star Trek* series finds the crew of the Enterprise on an idyllic planet; rule by a computer has meant there is no sorrow, death, labour, sex or births. Capt. Kirk's crew is forced to destroy the computer, thereby casting the inhabitants from an indolent life into a struggle for survival. Kirk is pleased to dwell on the upside: now he tells them, "they can learn something about men and women—caring for each other, being happy with each other," and that as they do so, the children will come. Easy enough for Kirk to say, since he gets to return to the comforts of the Enterprise, but Sanders's point is that the episode is entitled "The Apple" in clear allusion to Genesis, and draws a straight line between the apple of knowledge and sexuality.

Nothing has roiled the waters of Genesis commentary more than what it might say about the relationship between men and women. Adam, after all, gains the headship over Eve—"he shall rule over thee"—and thus all husbands over all wives, because she sinned first. If patriarchal societies have focused on that after-the-fall aspect of the story, more feminist readings have concentrated on Adam and Eve in the garden, where husband and wife are helpmates to one another. (In any event, neither of the first couple is very brave about accepting responsibility: he blames her, and she blames the serpent, who, if any one had bothered to ask, would surely have replied that "The devil made me do it.")



APPLES, fig leaves and a snake: not in the Bible story

But the aspect of the story most entrenched in popular reimaginings is the forbidden fruit/sexual intercourse link. Most early commentators held with St. Augustine that there was no such thing as sex until the first couple sinned, "and the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." Augustine took that as meaning they could now see what had not existed before: sexual arousal. Pop culture couldn't agree more, and the presumed sexlessness of new Edens is one reason it rejects them.

But regardless of whether human sexual relations are inherently fallen (i.e. sinful), childbearing is inherently painful and dangerous. The story of Adam and Eve portrays it as a punishment: "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." Strange then, that the "curse" of Eve has come to mean menstruation rather than labour pain. In the 12th century the mystic Hildegard of Bingen offered an explanation, granted her by God in a vision, during her period a woman "is in pain and in prison, suffering a small portion of the pain of childbirth I gave to Eve when she conceived sin in the taste of the fruit." These theological explanations of natural phenomena had real world implications after the arrival of modern painkillers. "Reverse the curse," runs a 2008 Midol pain reliever ad campaign. But early anaesthesia faced resistance from doctors who felt menstrual and labour pains were divinely ordained.

There is no end, as Sanders's survey shows, to the uses to which Western culture has put its foundational myth. In an era when our concepts of gender roles and sexual relationships—the aspects of the story of Adam and Eve that fascinate us most—are in flux, that's not liable to change. M



HOLY HOST TURNS INTO HEART

A priest in Sokólka, Poland, dropped some of the holy Host during mess, then picked it up and placed it into a special vessel with water. One week later there was a red stain on the consecrated item that appeared to be human heart tissue. Independent experts from a Polish university confirmed the find, and local Church investigators ruled out the possibility of tampering or foul play. Their report is being sent to the Vatican for investigation.

LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER/GETTY

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HORROR UNDEAD



Remakes of scary movies have never been hotter, but who wants to see a beloved cult classic gentrified? BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON

film

"The horror! The horror!" In *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad liked the word so much he wrote it twice. More than a century later, Hollywood still has the same approach. Any horror movie worth making once is worth making again. And again and again. If you want to rent a scary movie for Halloween, it's no simple matter. Will it be the 1978 *Halloween* or the 2007 *Halloween*? Or one of their eight sequel brood? Do you rent Hitchcock's *Psycho* or Gus Van Sant's eerily embalmed shot-for-shot remake with Vince Vaughn? Just how dead do you want your *Night of the Living Dead*? George Romero's black-and-white classic, or the 1990 colour version? Should the zombies in *Dawn of the Dead* terrorize a '70s mall or a 21st-century food court? Which *Body Snatchers* would you prefer to be invaded by? There are four, and a fifth is in the works.

CULT CLASSICS *A Nightmare on Elm Street 5*, *The Fly* (1958 and 1986), Alfred Hitchcock with one of *The Birds*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, and (at top, this page) *Psycho* (1998 and 1960)

And if you want to be absolutely sure to see a movie that's unoriginal this Halloween, go to the multiplex. There you can pick between the hard-core torture porn of *Saw VI*, the latest bloodbath from history's most lucrative horror franchise, or the soft-core suspense of *The Stepfather*, a toothless remake of a 1987 cult movie about a man who never joined a family he didn't want to murder.

Horror movies are Hollywood's backlot of the living dead. No genre is more fond of replicating itself. Zombies, pod people, psychopaths, wolf-persons—they love to breed. It's in their nature. Most promiscuous are serial killers, spawning serial franchises like *Halloween*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Saw*—and *Friday the 13th*, which is one film shy of a baker's dozen. But while slasher sequels generate the bulk compost in Hollywood's graveyard of recycled horror, the more intriguing experiments are remakes. And with more than 40 of them currently in the works—including *The Wolfman*, *An American Werewolf in London*, *Poltergeist*, *Videodrome*, *The Fly* and *The Birds*—horror remakes have never been hotter.

There is, of course, a fine line between sequels and remakes. A sequel is often just a tarted-up remake with a Roman numeral. And some remakes are just attempts to reboot a franchise, resetting it to zero for a new round of sequels. But a genuine remake is a stand-alone project from a filmmaker who has the nerve to say, "I'm going to make the same great movie, but better." Which begs the question—if the original was such a bloody masterpiece, why try to improve on it?

The most common reason cited: we're making it for a new generation that never saw the original. Followed by: we can do things with special effects that weren't possible when *The Blob*/*The Thing*/*The Mummy* was shot. (Not to mention cellphones—now it's hard to imagine how psycho killers could ever have functioned without them.) Remakes of arty foreign language shockers, like *The Vanishing* or *The Ring*, come with a lofter ration ale: we're bringing hyper-cool world cinema to American viewers who won't read subtitles. But almost inevitably the art gets lost in translation, with script makeovers that amp up the action. The next victim is Sweden's *Let the Right One In* (2008). In the hands of *Cloverfield* director Matt Reeves, the austere beauty of this child vampire tale has about as much chance of survival as a succubus in the glare of the noonday sun.

Cannibalizing the past with a Dr. Frankenstein sense of manifest destiny, Hollywood is always trying to build a better monster. But now it's excavating horror's pulp roots the way it strip-mined comic books. And what we're seeing, at least from the studios, is the gentrification of a genre. Whether the original is B-grade schlock or a Gothic gem, vintage horror is being upgraded with digital effects, slick spectacle and marquee names.

The cast of Universal's *Wolfman*, a remake of the 1941 classic, boasts two Oscar winners—Benicio Del Toro in the title role originally played by Lon Chaney, and Anthony Hopkins as his father. Directed by Joe Johnston, whose uncool credits include *Jumanji* and *Jurassic Park III*, this blockbuster already has a whiff of decomposition about it—originally slated for 2008, its release has been delayed several times and is now set for February.

Gentrifying horror for mainstream audiences is a risky proposition, because in trying to please a broad audience, the filmmaker can end up neutering whatever made the movie work in the first place. Take the current remake of *The Stepfather*. It's the film equivalent of a cheesy reno. Director Nelson McCormick and writer J.S. Cardone (the culprits behind the dreadful *Prom Night*

remake) took a low rent scary movie, which grossed US$2.5 million in 1987, gutted it, and turned it into a piece of tame US$20-million eye candy—an exploitation film of a different colour. Dylan Walsh (*Nip/Tuck*) plays stepdad to an air-brushed hunk (Penn Badgley of *Gossip Girl*), who spends most of the film cavorting half-naked around the pool with his bikini-babe girlfriend (Amber Heard).

Fans of the genre have an aversion to this kind of pasteurized horror. On *Joblo.com*, critic John Fallon calls it "*The Stepfather* for pussies." Dubbing its makers "the Hannah Montana(s) of horror," he says: "Much like the *Prom Night* remake, this one went out of its way not to show anything. I think there's like one drop of blood in the film ... someone should tell these dudes that PG-13 doesn't mean ZERO red grub."

Mark Burg, who produces the *Saw* movies, specializes in "red grub." And in a *Maclean's* interview, he underlined the pitfalls of sanitizing horror for a broad audience. "If you're running Universal, you're thinking, 'I've got to hit the 10-year-old and the 40-year old, because I've got to worry about that *Wolfman* [theme park] ride in two years.'" Burg's outfit, Twisted Pictures, doesn't have that problem. "We're not here to make movies for everyone," he says. "Our movies are edgy and hard-core and our fans like that."

Unlike the big studios, Burg doesn't gentrify horror. He revels in doing just the opposite—refurbishing old films to make them more grisly for the increasingly jaded young male audience. "If you look at a lot of the movies in the '70s," he says, "they didn't have the edge that ours do. We're trying to push the envelope."

Twisted Pictures recently bought the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* franchise. Burg isn't ready to reveal whether he will grind out more sequels or reboot the series with a remake, but he promises the violence won't lose any of its "edge" (which seems to be his favourite word). He is also producing four horror remakes that are now being scripted. *The Body Snatchers*, *Bedlam*, *Five Came Back* and *I Walked With a Zombie*. The last three are vintage titles from the '30s and '40s. *Bedlam* featured Boris Karloff and *Five Came Back* starred Lucille Ball.

"We're not taking anything away from the original," Burg stresses. "We're just putting our own spin on it, trying to make it more current for a generation that never saw the original. I mean, how many people do you know who saw the original *I Walked With a Zombie*?" Even if they had, by the time Twisted Pictures blows off the cobwebs and lays on the gore, they may not recognize it.

Burg was developing a remake of David Cronenberg's *Scanners* with Dimension producer Bob Weinstein and director Darren Lynn Bousman (*Saw III*, *IV*) before the project collapsed over creative differences. (Not everyone sees exploding heads the same way.) But even Burg believes some movies should never be remade. When asked about talk of remaking Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* with George Clooney and Naomi Watts, he says, "Certain directors are untouchable. You don't remake Hitchcock or Scorsese."

One might say the same of Canada's David Cronenberg. But there are three Cronenberg remakes in the works, including *The Fly*, which Cronenberg has agreed to produce and write for 20th Century Fox, with an option to direct it. The notion of a director remaking his own movie seems perverse. Austrian director Michael Haneke did it with *Funny Games*, but at least he had the pretext of transplanting his cruel tale of psycho home invaders to U.S. soil. It's baffling why Cronenberg would remake a classic like *The Fly*, which itself is the remake of a classic, especially after he's already turned it into an opera that failed to take off. When I contacted the director, he said he couldn't discuss it. But *The Fly* is, after all, a tale of mutation, and perhaps it's still lodged under Cronenberg's skin, creating an itch that just has to be scratched. It's hard to imagine him doing a hack job.

ONE CRITIC CALLS THE MAKERS OF THE NEW, PASTEURIZED 'STEPFATHER' MOVIE 'THE HANNAH MONTANAS' OF HORROR



OLD-STYLE *Let the Right One In* (top left), *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (top right), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (below)

Although most horror remakes and sequels are crassly commercial, some are artistically defensible. *Ahens* was a better movie than *Alien*. And as Colin Geddes, Midnight Madness programmer for the Toronto International Film Festival, points out, some films are dismissed as remakes when they are simply fresh adaptations of the same literary source—something Francis Ford Coppola emphasized with his productions of *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. "Often remakes are cash grabs," says Geddes. "But they can serve to further a legacy." No one gets upset when there's a new production of *Romeo and Juliet*, he points out. "You missed the original. Now you can see it with an all new cast."

Besides, he adds, remakes update old stories to reflect the times. Citing *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, he says the first remake in 1978 "was as good as the original and both clued into different paranoias of the era." Geddes is even tolerant of Hollywood producing inferior remakes of foreign horror films. "I don't get up in arms," he says, "because they're just going to shed more light on the original." In that sense, horror remakes are like cover versions of rock songs, or in the case of Gothic monsters, like jazz standards. Horror has become so rich with ironic homage that every film is a kind of monster mash-up—especially when the clichés are remixed by a trickster like Wes Craven, who created *A Nightmare on Elm St.* and *Scream*. Horror fansites are now abuzz with reports that Craven may direct *Scream 4*, reuniting the original cast. It would be like a reunion tour by a revered rock band.

Be it trash or art, the horror movie remake is hard-wired in the DNA of the genre, which exploits the fear of something coming back to haunt us—whether from the grave, the asylum, or the basement. What we're most afraid of, after all, is not the unknown, which we can't begin to imagine, but a scary new prototype of the monster we've already come to know and hate. M



WE'RE STALKING ... FERGIE

The Duchess of York, best known as Fergie, will not be throwing the big 50th birthday bash she envisioned—she doesn't have enough money. The *Daily Mail* reports the duchess was hoping to have a champagne celebration at the Royal Lodge mansion in Windsor, but has scaled back her plans amid rumours of an impending bankruptcy. Instead, Fergie will have dinner with her daughters at a London restaurant, followed by dancing at a private club.

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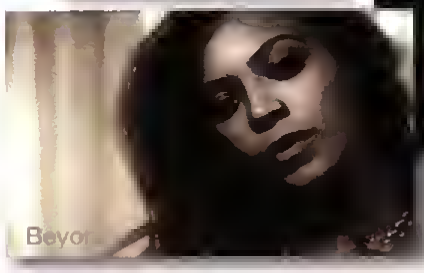
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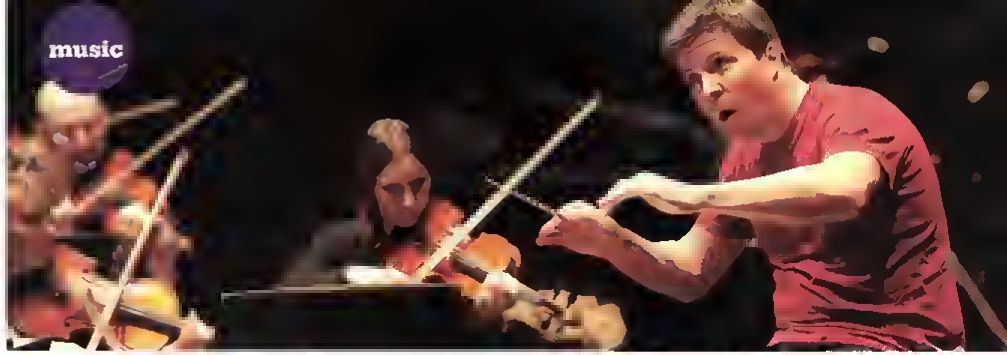






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Toronto's Lite Favourites



EDWIN OUTWATER's bold choices as conductor of the K-W Symphony have started to transform an already open-minded orchestra

Stethoscopes at the symphony

Arcade Fire's Richard Reed Parry has written a piece based on each musician's heartbeat

BY PAUL WELLS • *Madame Press Died Last Week at 90*, by the 20th-century American composer Morton Feldman, is as gently obsessive as a piece of music can be. It's a sweet, wistful tune that stops unfolding and repeats, dozens of times like a skipping record, on a G and an E flat. Edwin Outwater led the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony in the piece at his first concert as the orchestra's music director, in 2007. But he followed it with another piece about obsessive repetition. Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*, whose "duh-duh duh-duuuuuh" opening is built on the same G and E flat.

That's the sort of thing Outwater, an athletic and congenial 38-year-old Californian, likes to do. He programs a lot of 20th- and 21st-century music, perhaps more than any other conductor of a large mainstream Canadian orchestra. It's never just filler, and he uses it to recast the older Germanic repertoire that is the heart of any orchestra's programs, to make audiences think twice about what music is for. And if they resist, he doesn't get too worked up about it.

After the Feldman and Beethoven concert, "some woman came up to me the next week," he said recently. "She was in a minkish—a minkish coat, I would say. And she said, 'I think you're doing a great job. I really love the symphony. I have to tell you, that was like torture to me to hear that Feldman piece.' And she was smiling. She wasn't angry. 'I felt like I was getting my teeth drilled.'

"I said, 'Thank you for telling me. You don't have to like it.' It was a weird thing for her to hear that from me, I think. And she said, 'Well, okay. I didn't like it' and I said, 'Well, good.' "

Outwater's adventurous intellect and sunny disposition have started to transform what was already a solid and open-minded orchestra. As much as Research in Motion and the Perimeter Institute, the K-W Symphony has become part of what makes Kitchener-Waterloo a very distinctive community. Outwater is so confident of this band that he will take the K-W Symphony up the road to Toronto on Oct. 29, for a concert at the Royal Conservatory's new Koerner Hall. That's a cocky move, but the program he's designed with the brilliant young U.S. composer Nico Muhly is even more audacious.

Muhly's music blends ancient church chorales, minimalism and alternative rock. He's been a librarian for the modern music guru Philip Glass and a keyboardist for Björk. "I just called him," Outwater recalls, "and said, 'If you were to do an orchestra concert, what would you do?' He said, 'All passacaglias!' " A passacaglia is any music, ancient or new, built over a repetitive bass figure.

"It sounds very ponderous," Outwater said, "but I thought, man, if you can pull off an all passacaglia concert, that'd be amazing." The Toronto program will include a 17th-century Henry Purcell piece known as the "Bell Anthem," a ballet score from Muhly, some Philip Glass, and a new piece. A rather odd new piece.

"We asked Richard Reed Parry from Arcade Fire and Bell Orchestre to write a piece," Outwater says. "And it's all based on heartbeats." Whose? The musicians'. Everyone on stage will wear a stethoscope, and the pace of each musician's heartbeat will set the tempo at which he plays his part. It will come out fairly ragged. That's part of the point.

"I mean, that's what's out there right now," Outwater said. "There's all these people experimenting with sound who are in rock, or whatever, and they're very serious about it."

So is Outwater, and yet he has no intention of turning the K-W Symphony into a novelty act. At a recent concert he led his musicians with elegance and fire through two staples of the standard repertoire, Dvořák's *Eighth Symphony* and the Sibelius *Violin Concerto*. The musicians' energy flagged a little during slow passages, but on more passionate material they sound gorgeous, especially in the preternaturally clear acoustics of Kitchener's 29-year-old Centre in the Square concert hall. (The hall's superlative sound was a big drawing card for Outwater, though when asked why it sounds so good he admits, "I don't understand it.")

Whether on Germanic warhorses or newer material he must often explain to the audience from his podium, Outwater's goal is the same: "To be sophisticated and accessible. And fun. And basically, we're trying not to be everything orchestras are perceived to be. So, not snobby. Not, uh, old." M

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW TOLSON



JULIAN CASABLANCAS... HAS SOMETHING TO SAY

I just nod, I've never been so good at shaking hands / I live on the frozen surface of a fireball / Where cities come together, to hate each other in the name of sport / America, nothing is ever just how you plan / I looked up to you but you thought I would look the other way / And you hear what you want to hear / And they take what they want to take / Don't be sad—11th Dimension, from the new album *Phrazes for the Young*



WINTOUR at work is surgical in her approach. In the film, a cover with large type is chucked because it looks 'like it's for blind people'



OUT-DISNEYING DISNEY? These days *The Simpsons* may be just as guilty of the kind of myth-making they used to love to parody

These days the devil recycles Prada

The elitist Anna Wintour of this movie wouldn't have been caught dead in Queens

BY ANNE KINGSTON • Before *The September Issue*, Anna Wintour was an enigma wrapped in Chanel or Dior or, of course, Prada. Her *froideur* won her the nickname Nuclear Wintour, her boss-from-hell rep was cemented by *The Devil Wears Prada*, the *roman a clef* about an imperious, terrifying fashion editor written by a former assistant.

Now R.J. Cutler's riveting documentary, which opens in Canada this week, puts a closer lens on the 59-year-old who, in her 21 years as *Vogue*'s editor-in-chief, has transformed the magazine into *the* fashion bible. She famously made celebrities into models and herself the kingmaker of the $300-billion global fashion industry. Some of the revelations won't be new to fashion watchers: Wintour loves colour, has stratospheric standards, a sharp tongue, and inspires far more fear than her fictional doppelgänger ever did. In one delicious scene, an underwhelmed Wintour surveys Yves Saint Laurent's Paris showroom before turning to designer Stefano Pilati. "What, no colour in this collection, Stefano?" she asks dryly in her posh British accent, as a despairing Pilati looks ready to slit his wrists to offer some.

True to its title, the doc chronicles the assembly of *Vogue*'s September 2007 issue, which, at 840 pages (727 of them ads), was the fattest in the magazine's history—fashion's equivalent of the stock market peak. Watching the movie today, as parent Conde Nast shutters magazines (au revoir *Gourmet*) and lays off staff (*Vogue* lost six people last week), provides a look back to a gilded age when $50,000 photo shoots were scrapped on a whim and demand for luxury product was so high Neiman Marcus's CEO begged Wintour to ask designers to speed up shipping times.

Wintour was receptive to having cameras follow her and her staff for nine months, Cutler says, a move that now seems prescient. It was also her idea to make the September issue the movie's framework, which too was shrewd. September always is the best-read and most advertising-laden of the year. It's an ideal opportunity to burnish the *Vogue* brand.

At work, Wintour is as decisive as a heart attack and, like a shark, always looking ahead, never back. ("Fashion always moves ahead" is a motto.) She dissects cover girl Sienna Miller (and her "teethy" smile) like a surgeon, a photo is axed when a model looks "pregnant", a cover with large type is chucked because it looks "like it's for blind people."

Though as warm as an anaconda, Wintour also nurtures in her way, as evident in scenes showing her adoration of her daughter, Bee Shaffer, and her interaction with up-and-coming designer Thakoon Panichgul. "I told you I'd get you the Gap," she boasts after he's chosen to do a collection for the chain. (He's now a Michelle Obama favourite.)

What really animates the doc, though, is the creative crackle between Wintour and 68-year-old creative director Grace Coddington, the genius behind most of the issue's photo spreads. With her craggy face, wild auburn mane, baggy black clothing, and irreverent attitude, Coddington is a formidable foil to the tightly wound, helmet-haired editrix. "You could get fired for that," she chides a staffer who picks a black garment for a photo shoot. When another wails, "I want to kill myself" after Wintour shuts him down, she plays den mother: "You have to be tougher." She uses the camera's presence to get her way, and steals the doc doing it. "I love to talk money with Anna in front of you guys," she tells the crew. "It drives her crazy, it's the one way to get the budget up."

Now, of course, budgets are down, down, down—as is *Vogue*'s page count: the September 2009 issue had half the heft of 2007. So changed is the climate that even Nuclear Wintour is thawing. In August, she appeared on Letterman's *Late Show* with a brand-new accessory: a smile she's been practising in public ever since. Last month, she voyaged to Macy's in Queens, the land of Fran Drescher and 50 Cent, in her chauffeured Town to support a global fashion event.

Again, all shrewd moves. Wintour knows Conde Nast can be as fickle as the industry she intimidates: long-time legendary *Vogue* editors Diana Vreeland and Grace Mirabella were both suddenly canned. Neither were as publicly wedded to the magazine as Wintour is, a forging more complete with the doc. But she's not taking chances. Lately, she's been showing off a Wintourian version of the new frugality—wearing the same snakeskin coat four times in the past month. *Apres le déluge*, the devil recycles her Prada. M



STOP THE PRESSES... HOW MUCH FOR TIGER URINE?

"A reply to a question in Notes & Queries yesterday recommended purchasing lion and tiger urine from Chester Zoo to stop neighbourhood cats from urinating in a vegetable patch. Chester Zoo would like to forestall requests for its big cats' urine. It asks us to make clear that it does not in fact sell either tiger or lion urine. Many years ago the zoo sold elephant dung, but it no longer does."—*The Guardian*, apologizing for an Oct. 14 story

ERIC THAYER/REUTERS

A dissident view of life on the show

The Simpsons' first warts-and-all history may be better thanks to the producers' gag order

BY JAIME J. WEINMAN • John Ortved says that the people quoted in his new book *The Simpsons: An Uncensored, Unauthorized History* are mostly those who "had stories to tell, or axes to grind," or who are "too successful to care." Fortunately, that's a lot of people. Ortved, a Canadian journalist who wrote an oral history of *The Simpsons* for *Vanity Fair* in 2007, has now expanded that piece into the first book about behind-the-scenes conflicts at the world's most successful animated show. (Unfortunately, it went to press too early to discuss Marge Simpson's upcoming *Playboy* spread.) The book contains observations from *Simpsons* veterans like Conan O'Brien, Brad Bird (*The Incredibles*) and even one-time guest voice Tom Wolfe, but the list of people who wouldn't talk to Ortved is just as impressive: he told *Maclean's* that executive producer James L. Brooks asked "everybody who worked on the show not to speak to me." He got no participation from Brooks, creator Matt Groening, most of the people who have run the show, or the cast (except for a few quotes from Hank Azaria, voice of Moe and Apu). The book offers many *Simpsons* anecdotes, but they're from the point of view of people who have nothing to lose.

In some ways, this may be a more candid history of the show because we don't hear from Brooks, Groening and their supporters. Ortved thinks Brooks "decided to cancel all co-operation when he found out I was asking questions about Sam Simon," who ran *The Simpsons* originally and hired most of the staff. Many people feel that Simon, who left in 1993 after feuding with Brooks and Groening, is not given enough credit for shaping the franchise. Brian Roberts (now a director of such shows as *Little Mosque on the Prairie*) says in the book that Brooks "fell in love with the myth and the legend" that Groening was the sole creator. Ortved compares them to Walt Disney, who wanted us to think that "he created everything that was Disney."

But the lack of co-operation from the big people may have forced Ortved to rely more on unexpected sources, like the Fox executives who greenlit the show, or staffers who give their own unusual perspective on the way the show was run; many of them recall the dilapidated look of the original writers' room, full of ashtrays and what one writer calls "a sort of haunted house pinball machine." The book is at its strongest with off-centre stories, like the revelation that a key writer, George Meyer, invested in gold as a way of "betting against humanity," or that people were wary of dealing with Brooks's right-hand man, Richard Sakai (caricatured in one episode as a bad karaoke singer). It's a *Simpsons* history almost as odd as the show itself.

The book also provides an alternative to past interviews and DVD commentaries, where *The Simpsons* is portrayed as a place where everybody's happy and every episode turns out well. For Ortved's interviewees, who don't owe much to Brooks or Groening, the experience was not pure fun. Many of them talk about what Ortved calls "the level of animosity and the level of complexity involved with doing anything with James L. Brooks's company," and a representative of the show's original animation studio says that they were fired (and lost much of their staff) in "a vengeance thing." A writer recalls that he was humiliated by a producer for daring to speak up against the controversial crossover episode with Brooks's show *The Critic*. And Ortved says that one theme that emerged in interviews was that many people don't have a high opinion of Groening's contributions. "What surprised me the most about Groening is what a bad writer he is. He's a very good comics writer, but he was unable to transfer that writing to a sitcom format."

That might not be big news to those who already know that *The Simpsons* is what Ortved calls "a colossal collaboration." And the perspective of the creators and star actors might have revealed things about the show that are glossed over in this book. But their unwillingness to talk may provide a clue about what the world of *The Simpsons* has become. The show parodied Walt Disney's credit-grabbing in the episode "The Day the Violence Died," but now it may have become the same kind of insular institution, where people, according to Ortved, "got their back up because a myth was being challenged." No wonder some ex-staffers agreed to talk to Ortved, he says, because they felt that the gag order was "contrary to the ethos of *The Simpsons*." Maybe it was contrary to the original ethos; for what the show is now, it may be just about right. M



ACCORDING TO TV... HEALTH CARE REFORM

"The big story is, this health care bill passed the Senate finance committee 14 to 9. It cost over $800 billion. And that's just what lobbyists had to give to members of Congress."—Jay Leno

"Even though the bill passed, President Obama said that now is not the time to pat ourselves on the back, mostly because you might pull a muscle. He says, 'Wait until you actually have health insurance before you do anything.'"—Jimmy Fallon

EVERETT



GISÈLE THERIAULT (left) and Alicia Keys at the Black Ball in New York. Keys is wearing the Theriault necklace that sold for US$40,000



THERE THEY are again: Dean McDermott left Mary Jo Eustace (centre) for a very public new life with Tori Spelling (left and right)

Alicia Keys and the barber's daughter

The famous singer is behind a Toronto jewellery maker's fairy-tale success story

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON • Gisèle Theriault's life reads like a fairy tale: a barber's daughter from Cape Breton takes a talismanic necklace of gold and rubies to a glittering ball attended by superstars and a former U.S. president. There's even a fairy godmother—Alicia Keys. Theriault was operating a modest solo business out of her Toronto home, handcrafting silver jewellery engraved with inspirational messages, when she met Keys backstage at a concert last year. The pop diva took the jeweller under her wing, and since then Oprah Winfrey has been wearing her work. Theriault now has five employees and shares a New York publicist with Keys and the late Michael Jackson. This month Keys launched an enterprise called AK Worldwide, making her protege's jewellery line its pilot project. And last week at the Black Ball—a star-studded Manhattan gala to raise money for children with AIDS—Theriault saw a necklace that she created auctioned off for US$40,000. She had hoped it would go for more, but had a big consolation: The buyer was Oscar-winning actress Halle Berry.

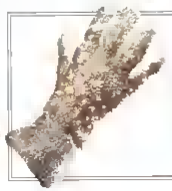
A few days before the Black Ball, Theriault sat in the sun splashed kitchen of her home—a three-storey semi that doubles as the headquarters for her company, the Barber's Daughter—and served a slice of vegan pumpkin pie and flowering tea. As a jasmine bloom opened like a sea anemone in a glass teapot, she confessed that, after working until 4:30 a.m. to finish the necklace for the ball, she had a dream that it sold for $100,000. "I govern myself by dreams," she says, and her subconscious appraisal wasn't so far-fetched. For last year's Black Ball, she made a silver necklace that sold for US$25,000. This one is far more lavish, and made of 18-karat gold.

It's an exquisite piece. Seven rows of ribbon chain flow over the collarbone in an Egyptian style, joined by a clasp that's a gold tablet engraved with a message signed by Theriault, "Our deepest wealth lives within the heart. To truly live it is to give it." The tablet opens to reveal a hidden compartment with an inscription authored by Alicia Keys: "Always shine your light on the world." But the revelation comes when the wearer turns around. Falling from the nape of the neck to the small of the back is a swing ladder of fine gold rope, with three inscribed rungs and two strands of rubies. Grazing the spine like a pigtail, it cries out for a backless dress. The design, says Theriault, is a yoga-inspired touch to remind the wearer to walk tall.

For the Black Ball, she also created silver dog tags engraved with a line from Gandhi: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." They were given to VIP guests including Bill Clinton, Sir Richard Branson, Chris Martin, and Jessica Alba. Theriault likes to stress that her work "is not about the bling." She identifies with a growing movement called Sacred Commerce—also the title of two recent books about synchronizing spiritual and material wealth. Calling herself part of "a new army of light workers," she has a sense of mission that puts a spiritual spin on the power of positive thinking. She once made an unsolicited gift for Leonard Cohen—a cracked silver ring engraved with his lyrics: "There's a crack in everything / That's how the light gets in." Next, she says, "I'm going to pursue Joni Mitchell."

The youngest of eight children raised by Acadian parents in a Cape Breton village, Theriault traces her core philosophy back to a childhood trauma. Like many a fairy tale, hers is wrapped around a horror story. She was hit by a drunk driver when she was 10 and was not expected to live. She still recalls having an out-of-body experience in the hospital. "When I let go, there was no gravity and no colour. Everything was light and bright. It was total compassion. When you have that experience, you can't take anything for granted. Everything is a gift."

Twice divorced with three children, aged 18 to 31, Theriault has been making jewellery since 1990. She's also worked as a calligrapher, designed everything from lamps to yoga studios, and served as an image consultant for bands—which is how she and Keys crossed paths. "Her pieces resonated so much with me," Keys told *Maclean's*. "As a lyricist I love the words that are written on them. Every piece has the touch of love in it." This Halloween weekend, the barber's daughter will celebrate her 50th birthday at another ball, a private masquerade party in Toronto. But at this rate there seems to be no danger that her Cinderella ride will turn into a pumpkin any time soon. M



WHAT THEY GOT FOR IT **M.J.'S LIGHT-UP GLOVE**

It's been four months since Michael Jackson died, but the King of Pop's moneymaking potential lives on. At a recent auction in California, the iconic light-up glove Jackson wore during his 1984 Victory Tour netted US$70,800. Billed as "the ultimate piece of Michael Jackson memorabilia," the glove is encrusted with Austrian crystal rhinestones and equipped with 50 little lights, which, wired on individual circuits, sparkle at random.

ANA LARA

GETTY PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY BRAD REINHARDT

You thought your divorce was bad!

Her ex's lovefest with Tori Spelling is on TV. Who better to write a post-split survival guide?

BY ANNE KINGSTON • If anyone has been goaded into wringing a balls-to-the-wall avenging divorce memoir, it's Mary Jo Eustace, who was tossed over in 2005 by her husband of 12 years, Dean McDermott, for Hollywood princess Tori Spelling. The skeezy details alchemized into tabloid gold: McDermott met TV mogul Aaron Spelling's daughter on the set of a Lifetime made-for-TV movie. Three weeks later, Eustace, a former co-star of the TV cooking show *What's for Dinner*, was blindsided by McDermott leaving her: they had just moved to Los Angeles from Toronto for his acting career and were adopting a seven-month-old baby girl, a little sister for their eight-year-old son Jack.

It gets worse. Unlike other women who have to ferret out information about their ex, Eustace only had to turn on *Entertainment Tonight* to view his "truly, madly, deeply, Tori" tattoo or pick up *People*, which devoted six pages to the couple's "magical" 2006 wedding in Fiji, to read her ex say of Spelling, "I've never had as much of a desire to get married and make a woman my wife as I've had with her." Since then, there has been the *Tori & Dean* reality show domestic lovefest with their two children on which to gag.

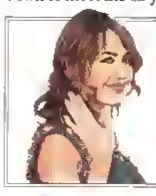
But Eustace is too clever to get caught in tell-all divorce memoir gridlock. Rather, she has strip-mined her misery putanively for others' benefit in an often funny, sometimes poignant survival guide, *Divorce Sucks: What to Do When Irreconcilable Differences, Lawyer Fees, and Your Ex's Hollywood Wife Make You Miserable*. Many will take comfort that their split isn't half as horrific as Eustace's—her daughter's adoption was nearly derailed, pitying women offered her money on the street, and, in the ultimate humiliation, tabloids reported her age as 62 when she was 44.

Sitting on a white sofa in the cozy living room of the Spanish-style house she bought after returning to L.A. from Toronto last year, a tanned and toned Eustace appears mended from a split she confides was more hellish than she depicted. "It's the tip of the iceberg." Still, post-divorce shock embers glow. She says remarriage isn't something she wants and expresses relief that Jack, now 11, isn't lured by his father's lavish new life. He attended his half-sister's first birthday party, she says, a blowout with 500 guests, $3,000 gift bags and make-your-own-pottery stations. "He came home and said, 'Whoa, this is not for me,' and I said, 'Thank God.'"

The book's directive to "love your children more than you hate your ex" pre-empts overt dirt-slinging. But Eustace is a master of the pin-in-the-voodoo-doll jab, beginning with the cover line "My husband left me for Tori Spelling (and you thought your divorce sucked)." She knows readers will expect some dish and she delivers, writing of her first meeting with Spelling, who showed up at her house wearing skin-tight jeans and thigh-high boots, her hair in pigtails. "Vulnerable and passive," is how she recalls the woman of whom she writes was her "Hiroshima." (In her memoir *sTORI Telling*, Spelling claims that she dressed down to meet the 12-years-older Eustace in a baggy sweatshirt and sneakers, and carried a kitchen knife in her purse.) And she shares that her son, his face shielded by an "X," appeared on *Tori & Dean: Home Sweet Hollywood* without her permission.

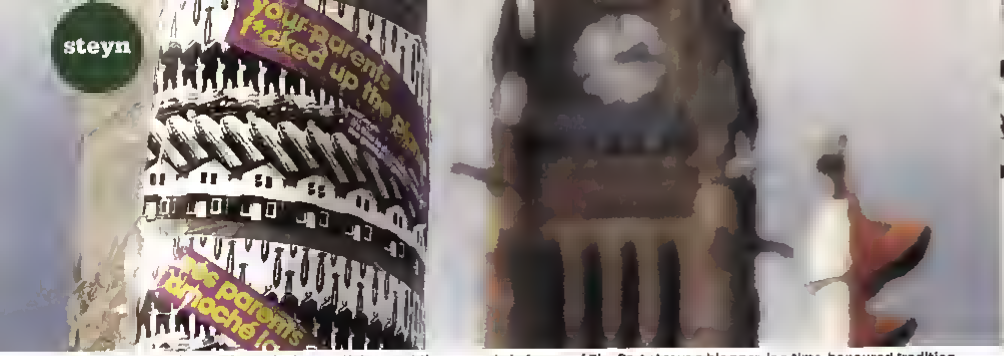
Eustace knows that, like her ex, she'll be accused of capitalizing on the Spelling connection. "It's fair game," she says. "But on the scale of exploitation I've been offered, it's nothing." Her public divorce has made her a "get" in the thriving spurned-ex-wife industry. She turned down a chance to appear on *Ex-Wives Club*, a reality show co-hosted by Marla Maples, Shar Jackson and Angie Everhart. She even took a meeting with a big-name producer who pitched a reality show produced by Spelling and McDermott on which they'd help her look for love. "It's so twisted and warped," she says. She said no and warned she'd sue if Jack appeared on camera again. "It's the most abhorrent thing to put your child in a reality show."

Eustace insists she wants to move beyond the "Tori & Dean" loop, as difficult as that may be. She's working on a new TV show, *Second Acts*, about women who redefine their lives, for the W Network. "I'd rather be remembered as a woman who survived a bad divorce than the woman who was left for Tori Spelling," she says. But she's shrewd enough to know the chances of that are slim (*Divorce Sucks* has already hit the tabloids: *Star* claimed Spelling "collapsed" over the "tell-all"). "As long as there's Google, probably not." M



MOST IMPROVED **MILEY CYRUS**

Miley Cyrus has quit Twitter, leaving more than one million distraught followers behind. The pop princess, who often updated the microblogging site with revolutionary thoughts like "laying by the pool thinkin," and "dumb blogs. I do not have a boyfriend," apparently left at the request of rumoured love interest Liam Hemsworth. Cyrus's fans are at a loss, calling for her return with tweets such as "nooo!!! twitter IS miley cyrus!!"



THE GREEN PARTY poster 'convincing youth to reject their parents in favour of The Party,' says a blogger, is a time-honoured tradition



HOW SOON before toilet sensors report you for using two-ply toilet paper?

Gullible eager-beaver planet savers

'The environment' is the most ingenious cover story ever devised for Big Government



MARK STEYN

I'm always appreciative when a fellow says what he really means. Tim Flannery, the jet-setting doomsaying global warm monger from down under, was in Ottawa the other day promoting his latest eco-tract, and offered a few thoughts on "Copenhagen"—which is transnational-speak for December's UN Convention on Climate Change. "We all too often mistake the nature of those negotiations in Copenhagen," remarked professor Flannery. "We think of them as being concerned with some sort of environmental treaty. That is far from the case. The negotiations now ongoing toward the Copenhagen agreement are in effect diplomacy at the most profound global level. They deal with every aspect of our life and they will influence every aspect of our life, our economy, our society."

Hold that thought: *"They deal with every aspect of our life."* Did you know every aspect of your life was being negotiated at Copenhagen? But in a good way? So no need to worry. After all, we all care about the environment, don't we? So we ought to do something about it, right? And, since "the environment" isn't just in your town or county but spreads across the entire planet, we can only really do something at the planetary level. But what to do? According to paragraph 38 on page 18 of the latest negotiating text, the convention will set up a "government" to manage the "new funds" and the "related facilitative processes."

Tim Flannery's disarmingly honest characterization passed almost without notice, reported as far as I can tell only by Brian Lilley of CFRB Toronto and CJAD Montreal. But professor Flannery has it right. Government transport policy is about transport, and government education policy is about education, but environmental policy is about everything, because everything's part of "the environment": your town, your county, your planet—and you. "We are the environment. There is no distinction," declared another renowned expert, David Suzuki, last year. And just as the government now monitors air and water quality so it's increasingly happy to regulate *your* quality.

In the name of "the environment," the state gets to regulate everything you do. The cap-and-trade bill recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, for example, is a bold assault on property rights in order to sell your home—whether built in 2006 or 1772—you would have to bring it into compliance with whimsical, eternally evolving national "energy efficiency" standards, starting with a 50 per cent reduction in energy use by 2018. Fail to do so and it would be illegal for you to enter into a private contract with a willing buyer.

Hey, but who would ever find out?

Don't be so sure. In 2006, to comply with the "European Landfill Directive," various municipal councils in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland introduced "smart" trash cans—"wheelie bins" with a penny-sized electronic chip embedded within that helpfully monitors and records your garbage as it's tossed into the truck. Once upon a time, you had to be a double-0 agent with Her Majesty's Secret Service to be able to install that level of high tech spy gadgetry. But now any old low level apparatchik from the municipal council can do it, all in the cause of a sustainable planet. So where's the harm?

And once Big Brother's in your trash can, why stop there? Our wheelie-bin sensors are detecting an awful lot of junk-food packaging in your garbage. Maybe you should be eating healthier. In Tokyo, Matsushita engineers have created a "smart toilet": you sit down, and the seat sends a mild electric charge through your bottom that calculates your body-fat ratio, and then transmits the information to your doctors. Japan has a fast-aging population imposing unsustainable costs on its health system, so the state has an interest in tracking your looming health problems, and nipping them in the butt. In England, meanwhile, Twyford's, whose founder invented the modern ceramic toilet in the 19th century, has developed an advanced model—the VIP (Versanle Interactive Pan)—that examines your urine and stools for medical problems and dietary content. If you're not getting enough roughage, it automatically sends a signal to the nearest supermarket requesting a delivery of beans. All you have to do is sit there as your VIP toilet orders à la carte and prescribes your medication.

But think of the environmental benefits. Readers may recall Sheryl Crow's brief campaign to get people to use only one sheet of toilet paper. (I recommended an all-star consciousness-raising single—"All we are saying is give one piece a chance.") Last month, the *Washington Post* reported a new front in this war. Two-ply bathroom tissue, according to Allen Hershkowitz of the Natural Resources Defense Council, "is the Hummer of the paper industry." Oh, and blame Canada, as that's where most American two-ply comes from: this decadent Dominion is apparently the House of Saud of toilet paper. In Britain, where closed-circuit cameras monitor you to check you're not eating a sandwich while driving, is it such a stretch to foresee those toilet sensors that wire your stool analysis to the government health centre also snitching on your two-ply Cottonelle? Or perhaps, if it's a Matsushita toilet, a few extra volts from the buttock zapper will be enough of a warning.

"The environment" is the most ingenious cover story for Big Government ever devised. You float a rumour that George W. Bush is checking up on what library books you're reading, and everyone goes bananas. But announce that a government monitoring device has been placed in every citizen's trash can in the cause of "saving the planet," and the world loves you.

In 1785, the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham began working on his famous "Panopticon"—a radial prison in which a central "inspector" could see all the prisoners, but they could never see him. In the computer age, we now have not merely panopticon buildings, but panopticon societies, like modern London—and soon perhaps, excepting a few redoubts such as Waziristan and the live-fire precincts of the Horn of Africa, a panopticon planet.

Yet high-tech statism still needs an overarching narrative. In the new school of panoptic fiction—such as John Twelve Hawks's recently completed *Fourth Realm* trilogy—the justification for round-the-clock surveillance is usually "security." But the "security state" is a tough sell: if you tell people the government is compiling data on them for national security purposes, the left instinctively recoils. But, if you explain that you're doing it to "lower emissions," starry-eyed coeds across the land will coo their approval. And the middle-class masochists of the developed world will whimper in orgasmic ecstasy as you tighten the screws, pausing only to demand that you do it to them harder and faster.

Consider a recent British plan for each citizen to be given an official travel allowance. If you take one flight a year, you'll pay just the standard amount of tax on the journey. But, if you travel more frequently, if you take a second or third flight, you'll be subject to additional levies—all in the interest of saving the planet for Al Gore's polar bear documentaries and that carbon-offset palace he lives in in Tennessee. The Soviets restricted freedom of movement through the bureaucratic apparatus of "exit visas." The British favoured the bureaucratic apparatus of exit taxes: the movement's still free, it's just that there'll be a government processing fee of £412.95. And, in a revealing glimpse of the universal belief in enviro-statism, this proposal came not from Gordon Brown's Labour Party but from the allegedly Conservative Party.

At their Monday night poker game in hell, I'll bet Stalin, Hitler and Mao are kicking themselves: "It's about leaving a better planet to our children?" Why didn't I think of that?" This is Two-Ply Totalitarianism—no jackboots, no goose steps, just soft and gentle all the way. Nevertheless, occasionally the mask drops and the totalitarian underpinnings become explicit. Take Elizabeth May's latest promotional poster. "Your parents f*cked up the planet. It's time to do something about it. Live Green. Vote Green." As Saskatchewan blogger Kate McMillan pointed out, the tactic of "convincing youth to reject their parents in favour of The Party" is a time-honoured tradition.

The problem, alas, is that, for the moment, there's still more than one party. But why? Last year, David Suzuki suggested that denialist politicians should be thrown in jail. And only last month the *New York Times*'s Great Thinker Thomas Friedman channelled his inner Walter Duranty and decided that democracy has f*cked up the planet. Why, in Beijing, where they don't have that disadvantage, they banned the environmentally destructive plastic bag! In one day! Just like that! "One-party autocracy certainly has its drawbacks," wrote Friedman. "But when it is led by a reasonably enlightened group of people, as China is today, it can also have great advantages. That one party can just impose the politically difficult but critically important policies needed to move a society forward in the 21st century."

Forward to where?

Well, fortunately the Copenhagen convention's embryo "government" appears immune to such outmoded concepts as democratic accountability.

Don't take my word. Listen to what the activists are saying: it's about every aspect of your life.

PS: Just to be safe, after reading this column, tear into pieces and flush down your toilet.

Oh, no, wait, don't— M

MAC GRAMLICH/GETTY

MACLEAN'S

BESTSELLERS

COMPILED BY BRIAN BETHUNE

Fiction

1	**THE LOST SYMBOL** by Dan Brown	1 (5)
2	**TOO MUCH HAPPINESS** by Alice Munro	4 (8)
3	**THE GOLDEN MEAN** by Annabel Lyon	7 (2)
4	**GALORE** by Michael Crummey	(1)
5	**THE YEAR OF THE FLOOD** by Margaret Atwood	3 (6)
6	**THE GIRL WHO PLAYED WITH FIRE** by Stieg Larsson	10 (13)
7	**THE WINTER VAULT** by Anne Michaels	8 (2)
8	**THE BISHOP'S MAN** by Linden MacIntyre	5 (2)
9	**HER FEARFUL SYMMETRY** by Audrey Niffenegger	2 (2)
10	**FALL** by Colin McAdam	(1)

Non-fiction

1	**THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH** by Richard Dawkins	1 (5)
2	**QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER** by William Shawcross	8 (2)
3	**THE CASE FOR GOD** by Karen Armstrong	2 (4)
4	**TRUE COMPASS** by Edward Kennedy	3 (6)
5	**OUTLIERS** by Malcolm Gladwell	7 (47)
6	**THE CELLO SUITES** by Eric Siblin	10 (31)
7	**GLENN GOULD** by Mark Kingwell	(1)
8	**EMPIRE OF ILLUSION** by Chris Hedges	4 (13)
9	**THE DEFENCE OF THE REALM** by Christopher Andrew	6 (2)
10	**O CAY** by Antony Beevor	5 (2)

LAST WEEK (WEEKS ON LIST)

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HALF-HUMAN, half-animal embryos are actually here, thanks to U.K. scientists. Here's a hybrid worth proposing: Harper and a tarantula.

ISTOCK; GETTY; ADRIAN WYLD/CP. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM CHOLEWA

Fixes for some common problems

Evolution too slow for you? Happier talking to the kids about sex than money? I can help.



SCOTT FESCHUK

Most of the time this column pokes fun, usually while finding a way to reference Charlie Sheen. But this week I'm here to help. There are problems in the world and I aim to solve them—much in the way the presence of Charlie Sheen "solved" my desire to ever watch *Two and a Half Men*.

Problem: A poll indicates that Canadian parents are more comfortable talking to their children about sex than discussing the ins and outs of money and personal finance.

Solution: Son, have a seat. Comfortable? Good, that's good. Look—it's time we had a talk. [*Deep breath.*] When a man loves a woman, and also a motorboat, he may feel the urge to engage in the act of "earning."

What happens is the man takes his ambition and inserts it into the employment market, resulting in a "job." Maybe he works as an astronaut or a doctor. Or maybe he works in a cramped cubicle for a glorified teenager named Gary who has a BMW. *A freaking BMW!* And every bloody day is like taking your soul and jamming it into the paper shredder and—well, you'll find out for yourself soon enough. I've seen the way that minimum-wage job at Burger King looks at you.

Sometimes, son, your ATM card just won't work, no matter how many times you swipe it or think positive thoughts. The good news is that today there are treatments for ED, or "economic dysfunction." They're called credit cards. Consult your financial adviser should your shopping spree last longer than four hours.

Bottom line is this: some guys have bigger wallets than other guys, okay? Nothing to be ashamed of. Sometimes the guys with the really big wallets will walk around at the gym with their billfolds hanging out. Steve down the street does this. Rest assured, son, that this does not impress anyone. Anyway, here's one of my old copies of *Forbes*. Just flip through and let nature take its course.

Problem: Barbie's popularity continues to erode. Worldwide sales of the iconic doll were down eight per cent in the third quarter, continuing a distressing trend for Mattel.

Solution: It's time to bring Barbie into the modern age so today's girls can better relate to her. Suggestions:

- Promiscuous Barbie—comes with home pregnancy kit (Deadbeat Ken sold separately).
- Arizona Barbie—cries real tears when Sheriff forecloses on Dream Mansion.
- DUI Barbie—features smeared mascara and glazed eyes for mug shot.
- Facebook Barbie—throws a tantrum if you close her laptop and try to play with her.
- Botox Barbie—a plastic face so lifelike, it's almost human.

Problem: Evolution is moving very slowly, which is boring.

Solution: Scientists in Britain have been given approval to create half-human, half-animal embryos. Let this abomination unto God begin!

Proposed hybrid: Michael Ignatieff + elephant.
Likely result: a political leader who never forgets his empty threats.
Proposed hybrid: Stephen Harper + tarantula.
Likely result: given the genes, this hybrid will attack coldly and without mercy. And because of the tarantula, it'll be hairy.
Proposed hybrid: Paris Hilton + dingo.
Likely result: Lindsay Lohan.
Proposed hybrid: Kevin Federline + parrot.
Likely result: the makings of the best reality show ever.

Problem: Being fat is contagious. A study found that obese children ate an average of 300 more calories when coupled with an obese friend than they did when they were teamed up with leaner friends.

Solution: Listen, I'm not smart enough to understand the complexities of *why* obesity is contagious—something to do with fat germs, I assume (or, in the parlance of science, carbo-cooties). But I do know this much: it's a big relief. For years I've worried that my excess weight may have something to do with all the crap I eat and the fact that my only daily exercise is pointing at the cupcake I want next. Turns out it can all be explained by my decision to befriend Grimace.

In fact, thanks to science, I can now envision a utopian future in which I won't be responsible for *any* of my failings. I can blame my obesity on my friends, my violent outbursts on Hollywood and my hairdo on a cruel, uncaring God.

Important point: not *all* thin people get fat just because their friends are overweight. Sometimes the process of transference gets crossed up—for instance, Burt Reynolds was buddies with Dom DeLuise for all those years and, while Burt maintained his waist line, he nevertheless ended up catching joblessness.

Point is: the solution to obesity is simple. Go ahead and get rid of your fat friends. But not—and I can't stress this enough—*not* by eating them. In a word: counterproductive. M

ON THE WEB. To read Feschuk on the famous, visit his blog. **macleans.ca/feschuk**

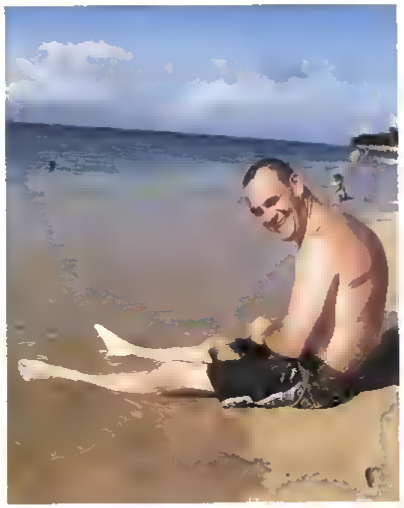
THE END

JEAN GUY POTVIN

1967-2009

Paralyzed from the waist down, he didn't let his injury hinder him. He even learned to scuba dive.

Jean Guy Potvin was born on Nov. 20, 1967, in the northern Quebec pulp-and-paper town of Alma. He was the youngest of 12 children born to shoemakers Marcelle Michaud and Joseph-Alfred Potvin, and grew up in the family home, adjacent to the business. After an early childhood that featured pranks such as flushing hockey pucks down the toilet, Jean found a more productive pastime: fixing old toasters and electrical equipment. By the time he was in high school, he was fixing cars. He studied mechanics at college in Rimouski, but hated the program—he had to spend more time with books than engines—and after a year moved to Chicoutimi, enrolling in an auto mechanics course.



When he was 23, he began dating Melanie Néron, a Charlevoix native who'd fallen hard for his sense of fun and energy. Within two years they'd decided to marry and move to B.C., to find work and learn to speak English. Melanie, a daycare worker, flew out first. Jean followed in the car, towing a trailer full of mechanic's tools. Vancouver was too big and too busy, so they settled in the bedroom community of Abbotsford, where each had landed jobs. Soon, they had a house, and three girls: Noemie, Mélina and Rébecca. By then, Jean, an extremely hard worker ("the stubborn Frenchman," his best friend Jon Merrick affectionately dubbed him), had become a heavy-duty mechanic for Fraser Valley Septic Tank Services. He was a workaholic, often spending his days off working on friends' cars.

On May 1, 2003, he was fixing a street sweeper, working beneath the large vehicle. Because it was a quick, simple job, he hadn't secured the tank with a lock bar. But Jean slipped, knocking a lever, sending the tank crashing down on top of him. His friend, mechanic Harvey Jones, jumped on a forklift, which he used to lift the tank off Jean.

When Jon and Melanie got to the Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster, they didn't recognize him. Jean's face was bruised and swollen, and he was bleeding from the eyes, nose, and ears. Whether he would live was an open question. His siblings flew from Quebec to keep vigil. After six days in a coma, Jean awoke to learn that he'd suffered a brain injury, and was paralyzed from the waist down. Because of a tracheotomy, he wasn't able to speak for three weeks. He communicated by pointing to letters on a board.

"Really dark periods" followed, says Jon. Jean, now confined to a wheelchair, had trouble concentrating and suffered ugly mood swings. At a low point, he told Melanie to take their daughters, live their lives, and leave him behind. But to the children—then 3, 5 and 7—it didn't matter whether he was walking or in a wheelchair. "He was just Dad," says Jon. Even little Rébecca learned to lift his 36-lb. wheelchair into the van. Jean would later tell Melanie their love had saved him.

They bought a new house, a ranch-style dwelling that allowed Jean to move around more freely. Determined not to let his injury affect his mobility, Jean learned to drive in a vehicle equipped with hand controls. In winter, the family hit the slopes every weekend, mainly Whistler and Cypress Mountain, Jean on a sit-ski (when he fell, the girls would race to be first to help him up). And they began camping again in places like Thurston Meadows on the Chilliwack River ("Melanie learned how to tow the trailer, and back it in like an expert," says Jon). After a while, it became difficult for Jean to spend the night, so he'd stay at the campsite until nine o'clock, roasting marshmallows with the kids, when it was time to pack it in, he'd head home, returning first thing in the morning. Sometimes he rode out on his hand cycle. He also bought a Segway, worked out at the gym every day, swam and learned to scuba dive.

Jean began mentoring others with spinal cord injuries, taking them on bus rides, to the race track and to the zoo, and became a public speaker for WorkSafeBC—telling his story so others might avoid taking "shortcuts" and getting hurt. Recently, he'd started an office job in Vancouver (which, when the cost of gas was factored in, earned him less than the disability pension he was required to turn down). "But he got to help people, and feel useful again," says Jon. The darkness had lifted.

On Sept. 11, at 8:30 p.m., Jean waved goodbye to his family at their campsite, this time at Cultus Lake in B.C.'s Fraser Valley. He drove off in a red Toyota Camry he'd owned just nine days, stereo blaring, a smile across his face. That was the last time they saw him. Three weeks later, Jean was found at the bottom of a steep, densely treed cliff off a winding stretch of Highway 3, east of Hope, it appears he'd driven off the road. He was 41. BY NANCY MACDONALD

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